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THE RELATION  
OF ULTRAMODERN TO  
ARCHAIC MUSIC

KATHERINE RUTH HEYMAN

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# THE RELATION OF ULTRAMODERN TO ARCHAIC MUSIC

By  
KATHERINE RUTH HEYMAN



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*To the Spirit of Art*

AND ALL PURE CHANNELS THROUGH WHOM  
IT FLOWS; NAMING BY NAME

*JEANNÉ GORDON*





## PREFACE

IN a Foreword I have always found the gist of the matter: what an author fears he has not made plain. This series of lectures, the outcome of one Conférence compiled from stray notes for a San Francisco club in 1916, is by virtue of scores of subsequent presentations so generally understandable that—contrary to the custom of writers—I shrink from the responsibility that my plain speaking entails. It is at the request of the publishers that these lectures are given to the larger audience known as the public, and my hope is that to each reader the book may serve only as a point of departure for the individual thought and research still too rare amongst musicians in my country. A Club will never take the place of a library, nor will a meeting serve the purpose of meditation.

I acknowledge with gratitude my obligation to Sasaki Shigetz, Takuma Kuroda, J. Landseer Mackenzie, Emily Adams Goan and Sidney Howard, and to the devoted heart of Marie Flanner in her indispensable coöperation.

Here, too, I would thank Paul Dougherty, the painter, for the encouragement given me at the outset of my researches when he said, "But any man who sees anything at all, knows that what he sees is n't all there is of it!"

In music, to find the rest of it, one draws near to the Source of Life itself.

KATHERINE RUTH WILLOUGHBY HEYMAN.



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# The Relation of Ultramodern to Archaic Music

## THE MODES

LAURENCE BINYON, in the "Flight of the Dragon,"<sup>1</sup> writes: "In the dance the body becomes a work of art, a plastic ideal, infinitely expressive of emotion and of thought; and in every art the material taken up, just in so far as the artist is successful, is merged into idea." Before this he says, "The walls, the roof, the pillars of a great cathedral are in the mind of the architect no mere mass of stones, but so many coördinated energies, each exerting force in relation to each other, like the tense limbs of a body possessed by a single mood of rapt exaltation."

To merge stone into idea may to the layman seem something of a task; but transmutation of music into its original substance is more readily conceivable. The closest rapport that can be established between our earthly art forms and the supersensuous verities is through the concept of relation and correspondence. Relation: this *to* that. Correspondence:<sup>2</sup> this *with* that. Ancient music took cognizance of these factors instead of

<sup>1</sup> Laurence Binyon, "The Flight of the Dragon," an Essay on the Theory and Practice of Art in China and Japan. Published by John Murray, London.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence is a sort of proportion showing the unity of all things in their original essence.

attempting the mimetic or the descriptive. If it seems harder for architects to build of mind-stuff because stiff, unyielding matter is present to their senses, do the facts not imply that to the great builders, as to the Buddhists, matter was but a sense perception and a symbol? Goethe says,

Alles Vergängliche  
Ist nur ein Gleichbild.<sup>1</sup>

For cathedrals are replete with examples of super-physical correspondences. Among these may be cited a chapel in Westminster Abbey conceived with reference to the numerical significance of the word *petros*, and Glastonbury Abbey, the oldest church in England (*vetusta ecclesia*), of which the chapel was built according to squares of 888 inches to typify the numerical value of the word "Jesus." Then if you care to look at a sketch of the Milan Cathedral reproduced in "The Canon"<sup>2</sup> you will see the beautiful symmetry of this edifice above and below the ground.

In study and meditation on these matters it became clear to me that, using the same twelve semi-tones as (relative) material out of which all Occidental music has been constructed for thousands of years, if the ancients laid such great stress upon different formulas of tones for different occasions, and the powerful churches laid so great stress upon special music for special occasions, the reason must lie within the fundamental arrangements of this

<sup>1</sup> W. F. Cobb, D.D., Rector of St. Ethelburga's in the City of London. "Mysticism and the Creed," preface, p. xv.

<sup>2</sup> "The Canon." Anon. Published by Elkin Matthews, London.

material. The difference is all in the placement of the semitone. It is to show something of these various arrangements and their connotations that these researches are submitted.

Our "major"<sup>1</sup> scale has held popular sway, with his sad little half-caste wife, the "minor," until the Western world has forgotten all their dignified and pious relatives. We have been content with semblances instead of verities during the past two hundred and fifty years, and the result in the technique of composition has been continual revision of rules made by pedants and broken by artists. For whom have these rules been made? They are disregarded every time the Creative Spirit takes command. Is it not time we discovered some basic truth in music on which we can build? The church is commonly said to have retarded the development of the art of music: the church forbade the use of certain factors that are now beginning to be revealed as erroneous, and held to certain factors that we begin to see are vital.<sup>2</sup> Among these I might refer to the intervals of the third and the fourth. The fourth has sounded ugly to us for several hundred

<sup>1</sup> "Not indeed that all musical systems are founded on the same elementary relations. But universally recognized as belonging to this class are the relations between any sound and its eighth above and below, either being regarded as a tonic; the relation between a sound and its fourth above, the latter being regarded as tonic; the relation between a note and its fifth above, the former being regarded as tonic. But the relation of the Major third which plays such a prominent part in modern music has no place as an elementary relation in the system of Ancient Greece." — Maurice Emmanuel, "*Histoire de la Langue Musicale, Avertissement*," p. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Aubry, "*Trouvères et Troubadours*." The Gregorian Age finds itself the inspiring genius of twentieth-century music.

years. Aristoxenus<sup>1</sup> writes of the fourth as a fundamental relation, and I find in my experiments that it has the relation in the chromatique scale that the fixed signs have in the Zodiac. The third, on the contrary, which has become pleasing to the ear of the Western world, connotes—if my experiments are true—the element of Fire to an extent which may be responsible for disaster through that element. The Greek arrangements of the tones within the octave were called the Modes, and you can find them for yourselves readily by using just the white keys of the piano and making an octave, C to C (our Major); D to D, the Phrygian; and E to E, the Dorian mode. The others can easily be added, for the principle is the same.<sup>2</sup> The semitone will come respectively at the end of each tetrachord or half of the octave, in the middle of each and at the beginning of each. In our twentieth-century music the modes are largely used, but generally as a manner only—a new language in which to say the same old things. For we have as yet no Canon of Musical Art,—as the Chinese have in painting, their Six Canons,<sup>3</sup>—and potencies are ignored.

<sup>1</sup> *Re* The Fourth, in which the higher note is tonic: "This melodic interval . . . may be regarded as the fundamental sound relation of Greek music."—"Aristoxenus," by Macran.

<sup>2</sup> Bourgault Ducoudray, "Mélodies Populaires de Grèce et d'Orient." See preface, *La Formation des Gammes Diatoniques*.

<sup>3</sup> Petrucci ("La Philosophie de la Nature dans l'Art de l'Extrême-Orient," p. 89). 1. La consonnance de l'esprit engendre le mouvement [de la vie]. 2. La loi des os au moyen du pinceau. 3. La forme représentée dans la conformité avec les êtres. 4. Selon la similitude [des objets] distribuer la couleur. 5. Disposer les lignes et leur attribuer leur place hiérarchique. 6. Propager les formes en les faisant passer dans le dessin.



Combarieu attributes the deformation of ethnical value of the modes to ignorance and haste. It is obvious, then, that to preserve the value to humanity of musical creation, there must be leaders who do not hurry. The deeper inner senses work in silence. Frederick Bligh Bond,<sup>1</sup> in "The Gate of Remembrance," speaks of pictures spontaneously apparent to the student *when in a state of mental passivity after intellectual effort in the particular direction needed*. The italics are in the original. Some inner sense of ours, as yet unnamed, verifies true and spontaneous concepts when we are sufficiently moved to lose account of sense impressions. Wagner writes in his essay on Religion and Art:<sup>2</sup> "In solemn hours, when all the *world's appearances* dissolve away as in a prophet's dream, we seem already to partake of redemption in advance." And he says elsewhere, "The soul of mankind arises from *the abyss of semblances*."

The Chinese music was in ancient times conceived according to a given tone, supplemented by other tones according to planetary influences. Ambros, the musical historian, accredits the origin of Chinese music to Fuh-Si, but I understand that Fuh-Si was a dynasty of sages and not a man; and that all Chinese culture had its origin in Fuh-Si! Chinese music is metaphysical in its quality. Each tone has a colour, a cosmic aspect, a human correspondence, a gesture, a number, an element, a trigram and a relative phase of consciousness. This matter becomes very intricate and I will only reproduce

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Bligh Bond, "The Gate of Remembrance."

<sup>2</sup> "Religion and Art." Prose Works, trans. by Ellis.

enough to serve as a point of departure for the devout explorer. This working out is from Eking (Japanese Ekki), a philosophical medium employed by the Zen sect of the Buddhists.

Among the Greek modes the Dorian appealed to me by its quality, not merely because the Hindus were said to use it for their tender songs and the Greeks considered it the mode par excellence; neither because it had been preserved in the music of various ancient established churches and in the folk song of Celtic and Slavonic countries. These facts, to be sure, would be sufficient to engage the attention and fix it upon the Dorian mode; but the quality that I felt in it was underneath and behind these facts as a truth shines faintly through an ancient myth. The Japanese philosopher, Sasaki Shigetzu, has furnished me with an explanation of my response to the Dorian mode. That mode lies from E to E on the white keys of the piano, and A is the tonic. It is one of the modes which, having their two halves alike in shape, have their scale tone on their dominant. In other words, the fourth note is the tonic.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the back of all systems that I have investigated I find the interval of the Fourth to be fundamental. The old Greek arrangement of two tetrachords, E F A, B C E, was called the scale of Olympus, and those notes represent according to Plutarch the numbers 6, 8, 9, 12; proportions which, to the Greeks, symbolized perfection.

"The theory of ancient music seems constructed from a study of harmonic relations existing between the parts of the universe; and the musical canon was also probably based upon certain symmetrical consonances discovered in the proportions of the planets and the intervals between their orbits."—"The Canon." Anon. Published by Elkin Matthews, London.

The tone E is mana-consciousness. Its correspondence among the elements is the Air. That consciousness is half human, half of the earth. It is the state of semiconscious infancy. In the adult it is that state of semiconsciousness which is manifest in moods. By a semitone E slides into F, the passions; as B, the dream, slides by a semitone into C, which is intuition. I give this as an explanation from Oriental sources of the presence of the semitones in our diatonic scale. To revert to E, in its relation to the sky it is the wind; relating to the earth it is a tree; relating to man it is a mood. It refers to the ear and to sound; therefore with reference to Art it is Music. The corresponding colour is green (chrome green). In taste, the nearest approach to its correspondence is the flavour of chicken liver. The gesture corresponding to E is from right to left.

It is perhaps such connotations in the world of sense that induced Scriabin to write to Brianchaninoff after the outbreak of the great war, and just before his death, with regard to world conditions at that moment: "At such a time one wants to cry aloud to all who are capable of new conceptions, scientists, and artists, who have hitherto held aloof from the common life, but who, in fact, are unconsciously creating history. The time has come to summon them to the construction of new forms, and the solution of new synthetic problems. These problems are not yet fully recognized, but are dimly perceptible in the quest of complex experiences, in tendencies such as those manifested by artists to reunite arts which have hitherto been differentiated,

to federate provinces heretofore entirely foreign to one another. The public is particularly aroused by the performance of productions which have philosophic ideas as a basis, and combine the elements of various arts. Personally I was distinctly conscious of this at the fine rendering of Prometheus at the Queen's Hall, London. As I now reflect on the meaning of the war, I am inclined to attribute the public enthusiasm, which touched me so greatly at the time, not so much to the musical side of the work as to its combination of music and mysticism."<sup>1</sup> Students of Scriabin will recall the words of Dr. Eaglefield Hull in speaking of the *Mystery*, Scriabin's unfinished work at the time of his death: "This work promised music on higher planes than those hitherto reached, — the opening of new worlds of beauty by the creation of a synthesis of the acoustic, the optical, the choreographic, and the plastic arts united into one whole by a central mystic and religious idea."

Perhaps it is a childish fear on my part of being left alone in this room that has made me drag Scriabin in by the hand. But fortified by his sympathetic presence I have courage to show you more of my Dorian treasures with the light of Ekki shining upon them.

The analogues just presented are of the tone E pure and simple, not affected by the shade of any other tone; for we are regarding it as the initial note or scale tone of a mode. But when we cognize A, the tonic in this (Dorian) scale, it must be in the E shade; and its analysis in that connection would

<sup>1</sup> Dr. A. Eaglefield Hull, "Scriabin," p. 70.

be as follows: A in the E shade represents pure Spiritual Power — not in the least degree material. In man it is the reflection of the Divine Will; with reference to the sky it is lightning; with reference to the seasons, it is Spring; of day it is Dawn — the return, the resurrection; of the human body it is the left foot; referring to the face it is the jaw, because it is a power that crushes.

In the words of my authority: "This power comes from the sky in the Autumn and reappears from the earth in the Spring. That time they shake and the very fine power shakes and cracks; and breaks the seed and brings it up to the surface of the earth and opens the flowers of the trees and the grasses. But at the beginning of the year the power is very feeble and increases in February and is complete in March (Chinese weather). Then purple turns to green and this power vibrates the green leaves in the air as it shook the seeds in the ground. It remains in the sky till September and makes the great storms."

In colour this A is the blue-purple of an electric spark. With reference to art it is sheer power; not intellect, not any wisdom, but monistic power. Therefore the art typified by the tone A would be athletics. According to my own experiments the scale tone and tonic of the Dorian mode represent Saturn and the Sun, Leo and Capricorn, the triangle and the hexagon; and the scale tone is representative of St. Mark. I must confess that most of the books on musical history have only stimulated me to fresh research, to controvert the shallow and bigoted opinions they present. I think it was Ezra Pound



who remarked trenchantly that the first requisite of art was a lack of dullness. Is there anything as dull as a book on Musical History? It is from other studies that I have learned most about the essence of music: quaint books on the human race in other phases of expression and aspiration; books on ethnology, architecture, transcendentalism and literature.

The Greek modes have been in disuse in European music really only since the Reformation, and the music of Celtic and Slavonic peoples has never quite forsaken them.<sup>1 2 3</sup> The deformed Lydian mode, which we call the Major scale, has in other European countries for a quarter of a millennium borne the burden of all emotions. Please do not

<sup>1</sup> Irish Folk Songs, harmonized by Hughes.

<sup>2</sup> Breton Folk Songs, harmonized by Bourgault Ducoudray.

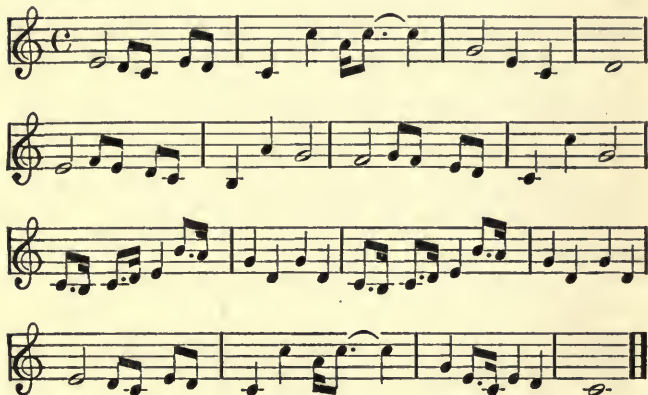
<sup>3</sup> "There is not a country in Western Europe that can boast such great antiquity for its music as can Ireland," maintains Fiske O'Hara. The popular Irish tenor is an enthusiast on the subject of Celtic music and literature, and has made a deeper study of it than most singers.

"The melodies we admire so much today can often be traced back to an eastern or oriental origin," he says. "It is a far cry from the present time back to the days of St. Ambrose, in the fourth century, but we have to go back there to get at the root of the question, if indeed we may stop there. Some of our historians trace the Irish harp back to the Egyptians, from whom the early Milesian adventurers obtained it. The date of their arrival in Ireland is estimated at about 2,000 B.C.

"In the middle of the fourth century, St. Ambrose went to Syria and Palestine and collected a number of the traditional Hebrew melodies, to which he adapted the early Christian hymns. He also brought back with him a system of musical notation, consisting of four scales, which have since been known as the Ambrosian Modes. These were brought to Ireland by the ecclesiastics under St. Patrick. Most of the early Irish melodies were composed on these scales."—*Detroit Free Press*.

think me altogether profane when I speak of our limited material. It is hard, I know, to dissociate a melody from its accustomed reactions on our own nerve centers. Yet I do not think we can, for example, better express three such varied sentiments than by these modifications of identical material.<sup>1</sup>

*Moderato*



Remove the words from our songs and intrinsically what is the content? Is it life or is it death we are singing of? Is it winter or summer we are

<sup>1</sup> Father W. J. Finn, conductor of the Paulist Choristers of Chicago, said, "The *Agnus Dei* in the St. Cecilia Mass is noble and exalting sung with the words and its proper expression. But strip it of its text and what meaning remains?" He adds: "Hear Caruso sing Percy Kahn's setting of the *Ave Maria* and Caruso's interpretation is spiritual; but take away the text and Kahn's *Ave Maria* will be a good substitute for Canio's Lament."

In this connection I would refer you to "Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures," by E. Lang and G. West, published by Boston Music Co. The chapter on Special Effects and How to Produce Them throws new light on the lack of valid emotional significance in our nineteenth-century music.

singing in? Is it a warlike band or a dreaming child that we are singing to? Who knows, from our music? And the composer, in despair, writes *Espressivo*.

Music has fallen upon evil days in the dark ages since her divorce from religion. May I be forgiven for recalling to your mind, in the event of your having recently thought only in the idiom of our customary European music, a few of the old Greek modes with their names? I will use C as the scale tone of each, to present the various qualities of the modes more distinctly. There are too many with their fourfold uses to dilate upon exhaustively, but I can refer you with confidence to the preface in the book by Bourgault Ducoudray, "*Mélodies Populaires de Grèce et d'Orient*."

## DORIAN:

Tonic



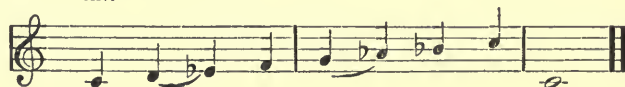
## PHRYGIAN:



## LYDIAN:



## HYPODORIAN:

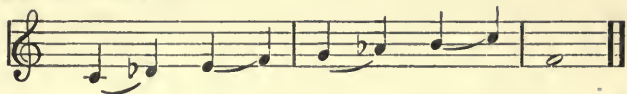




## HYPOPHYRGIAN:



## CHROMATIQUE-ORIENTALE:



Now there were some hybrids in use in olden times as well as the pure modes, and under the alias of the minor scale one of them has long been in our midst. If you look at the harmonic minor scale, dividing it in the middle, you will see that it is a combination of a Phrygian lower tetrachord with an upper tetrachord Chromatique-Orientale.



The Chromatique-Orientale is a very interesting mode. While I was studying these matters in London I had a Greek magazine published in Constantinople called *Μουσική*. In that magazine there was a fragment of Ancient Greek music in this mode translated by Pachtikos into modern notation. The mode dates from what we would call almost pre-historic times. I cannot find its Oriental origin, for while it is common in modern Russian music, some Jewish students tell me it is like the music in the Synagogue. M. Saint-Saëns told me that he had heard it in Egypt, and a Greek writer for whom I played my song "Mystic Shadow," written in the mode Chromatique-Orientale, mistook it for

the popular song "Galaxide," named after a coast town in Greece.<sup>1</sup>

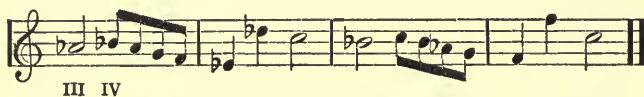
MYSTIC SHADOW. Composed London, 1912.



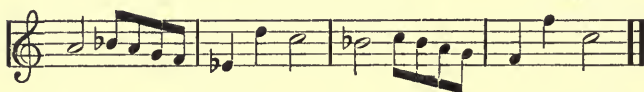
To show you the "virtue" or power of these modes let me take a familiar four-bar phrase using C as the scale tone and beginning the tune on the third from the *tonic* in every one of the modes.



DORIAN



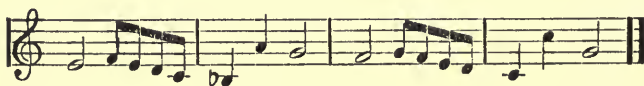
PHRYGIAN



HYPODORIAN



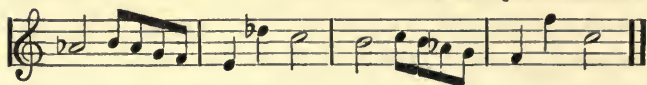
HYPOPHRYGIAN



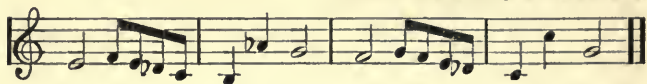
<sup>1</sup> See "Musical Scales of the Hindus," by Sourinda Mohun Tagore (Calcutta, I. C. Bose & Co.). Of the Sampūrna Thāt, or Scales of 7 notes, the ninth Scale is the Chromatique-Orientale.

# ULTRAMODERN TO ARCHAIC MUSIC 15

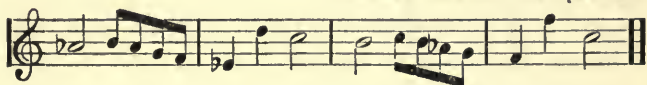
## CHROMATIQUE-ORIENTALE



## HYP0-CHROMATIQUE-ORIENTALE



## ARCHAIC USE OF OUR "MINOR"



In using these modes for your own amusement or instruction the best results are obtained by first considering each mode as you would C Major in the beginning of the first year of harmony. Then when you really write naturally in a mode, its quality is most pronounced and most interesting if you use the pure material without any accidentals. Ravel in his Greek songs has made good use of the modes, but never in so convincing a way as Grovlez. Grovlez is, I understand, a product of the Scola Cantorum in Paris, of which Vincent d'Indy is the head; and the most charming use of the Dorian mode in any piano composition that I know, exists in the little Sarabande in a slender volume by Gabriel Grovlez.<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, the *Chanson du Chasseur* in this same volume is written in the Lydian mode in A with D for the tonic. The effect is that of D Major with G# in it, which of course would not be D Major at all; and the thing could no more have been written from such a confused basis of thought

<sup>1</sup> "Almanach aux Images," by Gabriel Grovlez.

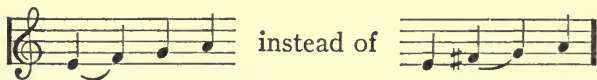
than could the Scriabin Prelude, Opus 51, marked *Lugubre*, beginning



have been written in A minor as musicians have insisted. The essential features of A minor are lacking. This Prelude is written in a hybrid scale on E,



as consistent a mode as our ordinary mongrel of Phrygian and Chromatique-Orientale. The only difference is that Scriabin used here a Dorian lower tetrachord instead of a Phrygian



and has founded the scale on its dominant in ancient fashion, making the fourth the tonic. For you have only to read the "Evolution of Form in Music" by Margaret Glyn or the preface to Bourgault Ducoudray's book of Greek folk songs to perceive the normality of this separation of scale tone from tonic.

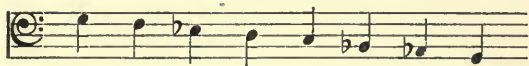
One great error in German and English instruction in counterpoint is the lack of recognition of

this duality.<sup>1</sup> As in perfect rhythm the accent is independent of the beat, the scale tone and tonic in a perfectly conceived mode have their individual entities which may or may not be identical. One of our losses during the recent centuries of music came through the identification of scale tone with tonic, destroying the virtue of the mode, just as by common acceptance due to vulgarization of rhythmic concepts, thesis and accent have become synonymous, destroying the virtue of the rhythm. As Doctor Hull points out in his book on "Modern Harmony," many of the great composers of the recent era have at moments overstepped the proscribed boundaries of the major and minor scales and wandered into the preserves of this neighbouring kingdom of the modes.

The Chopin Fantasia opens not in F minor but in the Dorian mode in C that has F for its tonic,



and the Liszt Sonata opens with a phrase in that same mode repeated in the Chromatique-Orientale.



It is a poignant use of this material that Liszt displays. The exotic note of mystery with which he

<sup>1</sup> The so-called "Tonics" and "Dominants" appertaining to the ancient church use are here shown for the sake of completeness, although the modern composer is entirely unaffected by them. This indifference leaves the Aeolian identical with the Hypodorian, the Hypomixolydian with the Dorian, the Hypoaeolian with the Phrygian, while the Hypolydian coincides with our major scale. Hull, "Modern Harmony," p. 25. Compare Bourgault Ducoudray.

opens the Sonata is repeated just before the Fugue and reappears at the close of this eloquent work. But Liszt was close to the church which conserves the Mysteries for us, and perhaps it would not be idle to give his B minor Sonata the subtitle of "The Earth-life Dream."

There is no reason, of course, why a mode should lend itself immediately to our service, or be spontaneously as flexible to our hand as an accustomed tonality. An Asiatic would not be able to employ the major scale with little love and great success. The novel chords and sequences arising out of a given mode must appear as normal, as inevitable to us as the VI, II, V, I of our customary scale, before that mode has become our language in which we can speak without premeditation. If you do not realize what this shifting of unconscious anticipation means, try to transpose at sight my simple little Russian Cradle Song,<sup>1</sup> in which there is just one accidental before the last refrain, or my Dorian Lullaby,<sup>2</sup> which has none at all.

Arthur Farwell was kindled by my enthusiasm for the modes to make an interesting Phrygian experiment in "The Evergreen Tree."<sup>3</sup>

Charles Griffes discerned in the *Chromatique-Orientale* the charm that led me to introduce it to him, and this gifted artist, whose loss is a blow to American music, made his first use of the scale *Chromatique-Orientale* in "The Kairn of Korid-

<sup>1</sup> "Russian Cradle Song" (Arthur P. Schmidt, Boston).

<sup>2</sup> "Dorian Lullaby" (Boston Music Co.).

<sup>3</sup> Percy Mackaye and Arthur Farwell, "The Evergreen Tree," A Christmas Community Masque of the Tree of Light. The John Church Co.



wen," a Dance Drama which was presented at the Neighbourhood Playhouse in 1917. His harmonization of old Chinese songs (published by Schirmer) made of five, six, and seven-tone scales, is scholarly and beautiful, and does certainly present "a lack of dullness." Even more than that, it reveals an immersion of himself in the mode chosen. Surely, certain composers of the black-walnut period have used the modes, but from without rather than within the realm of their spontaneous creating. They *used* the modes, that is all. Brahms used them, but he assimilated them, as Bantock does. He used them by taking them into himself, which is Analysis, instead of going out into them, which is Sympathy.<sup>1</sup> The *Dial*, some time ago, made a discriminating criticism of a book in saying, "It suggests the book of a writer who has attempted to immerse himself in the subject but has not absorbed its implications."

There is an axiom, "Generation from generation is never fecund." The meaning is this: Creation was complete in the beginning. Formation, or generation, has continuously taken place since the beginning, but nothing more has been created. Now in the microcosm as in the macrocosm, there is the World of Formation and there is the World of Creation. Whether you wish to regard the World of Formation as a mere sense perception is your own privilege to decide;<sup>2</sup> but a word, a thought, a person even, generated, has of necessity to be reborn, or enter the World of Creation, before power is

<sup>1</sup> G. R. S. Mead, "Quests Old and New."

<sup>2</sup> Cobb, "Mysticism and the Creed," p. 140, par. 2.

acquired, before it becomes fecund. The stolen thought, the borrowed word, the Tomlinson of a man, is only generation from generation. There is not that force of Nature in it which makes things move. Of our American music Ernest Newman writes in the *Manchester Guardian*: "For so original a nation in many matters the Americans are curiously imitative in music. Their MacDowell and Loeffler and Parker and Hadley and all the rest of them that are known over here are second-hand talents; almost everything they have to say has already been said in some form or another by some one else . . . it comes to us only as the reflection in a mirror, a distillation of some one else's brew."

The whole-tone scale is an important factor in the music of the early twentieth century, but so far as I know, it is negligible as an element in archaic music. Comment of mine added to the writings of Clutsam,<sup>1</sup> Hull,<sup>2</sup> and Lenormand<sup>3</sup> on this scale would be little short of impertinence, for the only original offering I have to make in connection with the whole-tone scale is its supermundane correspondences. Since this working-out is only empirical, I will merely say that the strongest correspondences I find here are Earth and Air.

The fundamental tonal arrangements in ultra-modern music that have a specific relation to archaic music are the Greek modes, the Scriabin scales, and

<sup>1</sup> "The Whole-tone Scale and its Practical Use." *The Musical Times*, Nov. 1, 1910. Vol. 51, p. 702.

<sup>2</sup> A. Eaglefield Hull, "Modern Harmony" (Augener). Chap. V.

<sup>3</sup> Lenormand, "A Study of Modern Harmony." (Boston Music Co.). Chap. X.



the duodecuple scale. Now the duodecuple, or scale of twelve equal divisions within the octave without a tonic or center of repose, is found in aboriginal music, notably that of the American Indians. For many years music of the Indians of the West had been transcribed by ear. Then the Hemenway Southwestern Expedition made more scientific attempts at recording this music, and the phonograph revealed grave inaccuracies in aural records previously made. Benjamin Ives Gilman writes of a Hopi Snake-song,<sup>1</sup> "The singer delivers the melody with the lithe security with which he handles the snake in whose honour it is chanted. Armour for defense and a scale for guidance would alike be gratuitous hindrances."

This duodecuple scale is used by Stravinski, Schonberg, and Ornstein with good effect. Many moderns attempt its use, but freedom from a subconscious sense of tonality is as rare and difficult of attainment as freedom from a subconscious sense of authority. With some success the Dalcroze school in its improvisations makes use of the duodecuple scale. Emancipation from a tonic center is doubtless a connotation in the art-world of the change of ideals in the political and religious worlds.<sup>2</sup> As in Hindu music<sup>3</sup> there were many deities and many scales,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Journal of American Ethnology and Archaeology*, Vol. V. Houghton Mifflin, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Morse Rummel, "Hesternae Rosae," Serta II. Preface.

<sup>3</sup> Shahinda, "Indian Music." Wm. Marchant & Co., The Goupil Gallery, 5 Regent St., London. Preface by F. Gilbert Webb. "The music of all countries is ever the echo of the idiosyncrasies and mental states of its producers."

<sup>4</sup> Rajah Comm. Sourindro Mohun Tagore, "Musical Scales of the Hindus."

each under its own ruling spirit, so in less eastern lands there was the rule of the planets with Tonic and Dominant or King and Priest. Then in place of Modality, which involved these two under planetary influences, came the new order under Protestantism, its very ignorance possibly under divine guidance leading toward a purer monism or unity. Thus came Tonality the King, a powerfully magnetized center; then equal freedom of the twelve tones without domination, analogous perhaps on the positive and negative planes to Democracy and Anarchy. *If* "Armour for defense and a scale for guidance" are really "alike gratuitous hindrances," then the scheme may be justified, and with it who knows but that we are even now entering upon a new era?

I would not say, however, that our ultramodern music is the last word in music. I would rather suggest that with the achievement of a general understanding of the cloistered mysteries that inspired its source, we shall have completed what I would call the Grecian cycle. Then we can begin to think about ultramodern music.

Let us conclude with a word from that delightful book by Claude Bragdon, "Projective Ornament": "The new beauty which corresponds to the new knowledge, is the beauty of principles; not the world-aspect, but the *world-order*"; and a parallel thought in the works of one Fu-Hsi about four thousand years ago: "Three represents heaven, two the earth. The harmony of these is the *World-order*, of which the image is Music."

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## DEBUSSY

THE home is the source of the musical life of a country, as I hope to explain to you in this chapter on Claude Debussy. Claude Debussy shared honours with Richard Strauss. He is a contemporary of Richard Strauss. At the beginning of this century Richard Strauss was a sensation from Germany. He discovered something. One of our critical poets has observed that as a scientist does not lay claim to his title until he has discovered something, neither should the artist consider himself an artist before he has made a discovery. In the nineteenth century Wagner had been a sensation from Germany. He also had discovered something. It was high time for France to find within her borders a peer of the greatest German musicians. In science France has always had much to offer. In literature she has never been sterile. But music had gone along in Germanic lines since the early nineteenth century. Händel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, Brahms—perhaps because of the Stich-und-Druck, the lithography and printing enterprises of Germany that served to popularize her music throughout the world, perhaps because of the German pianos that excelled the French Erard and Pleyel, perhaps because in English-speaking countries our mediums of circulation of music were named Breitkopf und Härtel, Augener, Schmidt,

Schubert, Schirmer, Litolff, Peters, Fischer. The piano had long been the advertising medium of national music. The piano was the household pet. Mechanical pianos have now put the worthless piano teacher out of business. The rank and file would rather turn on the victrola and play a rag, the domestic national music, than turn on the embarrassed and red-faced schoolgirl to play what a pupil of a pupil of a teacher in Germany had taught her. The automatic instrument has established a standard of technical perfection in the rendition of the classics for household entertainment that is not attainable by the novice. It has given us a respite from bad teaching and bad art while we take our breath for the art to come. And in the respite the spell of Germanic music is broken.

The first French exponent of piano literature in our time was Pugno. I doubt that even he could have excited much comment had it not been for his association with the violinist Ysaye. We were too accustomed to the German virtuosi. The creative interpretations of Ysaye changed our ideal of violin playing, and in the first years of this century Thibaut came to ratify our newly formed concept. Fickle as we are, the virtuosity of the Russian school has now claimed our attention, but in the meantime the Joachim superstition disappeared.

The German vocal tradition by its very virtue had become national and limited. I mean, the songs were beautiful, the songs of Schumann, Schubert and Brahms, largely because of the gift those great liederwriters had of fitting the vowel and consonant to the tone and pitch. German lieder are untrans-

latable. Hear *Die Beiden Grenadiere* in French and you will be convinced if you have doubted this. It needs the real understanding of any language to present its songs. Each language has its own nuance and its own quantity. Then, too, the general subject of German songs is Love-and-death, and each national approach to this theme is individual.

France had a pretty, light sort of salon music for the voice, Massenet, Reynaldo Hahn and others, that were rather like Louis Seize furniture—an anachronism in the nineteenth century. It may have been on account of the paucity of native impulse toward musical creativeness that the French government in the early 70's sent out Bourgault Ducoudray to the Near East to bring home discoveries that would inspire young artists.

In making the gesture away from Wagner, France had first the aid of César Franck, the Belgian composer who was for many years organist of the Madeleine. He employed modes and rhythms that had been conserved in the church. His pupil Vincent d'Indy followed in his footsteps, and a disciple of d'Indy named Gabriel Grovlez has carried on the tradition of his master and grandmaster. You remember undoubtedly that it was the idea of César Franck to get away from the intense emotionalism of Wagner which had exerted such a powerful influence upon France. Those who have followed in the footsteps of César Franck may sound thin to us. They do not set our emotions tingling, they do not stir us, they do not even worry us. César Franck had a mystical quality which was individual. That part of his gift and of his theory he could not im-



part. His songs are not too interesting, but where he has the resources of the orchestra he exemplifies with great sincerity his anti-Wagnerian doctrines. He aspired to a spiritual antithesis to Wagner's emotionalism, and his impulse was undoubtedly in the direction of the future of music.

Appreciation of Franck was not a political anti-Wagnerian motive such as that which has fostered recognition of Debussy. His music was scholastic, monastic, but it was not strong enough. Its genius was exclusively Roman Catholic, while Richard Wagner used his emotional power for inclusively religious ends; and Richard Strauss permitted his emotionalism derived from Wagner to be an end in itself. There we have the musical status of the two countries in 1900, the beginning of our century, with Eulenspiegel rampant.

Now in 1902 they had in France the first performance of Debussy's *Pelléas*. Previously his *Nocturnes* had been played by Chevillard<sup>1</sup> and the String Quartette by La Société Nationale.<sup>2</sup> Twenty years earlier Debussy was receiving three medals for theory, two for piano, the first prize for accompanying at the Conservatoire, and receiving honours for counterpoint and fugue at the age of twenty. About that time he went to Russia. He frequented cabarets, he met the Russian gypsies, he became familiar with Moscow. Arenski had made a success with his piano Concerto and was developing rhythms. Scriabin was a child of ten, already writing like Chopin. In Russia Debussy saw the score of Boris,

<sup>1</sup> Concerts Chevillard, Paris, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Société Nationale, 1893, by the Ysaye Quartette.

which was then unknown. It is no wonder that he was much influenced by this visit to Russia. He had always hated the restrictions of the harmony book, in which he was perhaps not different from other young students, but the Prix de Rome and his travels gave him authority which many another young composer might covet, to ignore the sacred canons of a harmony book that is revised from time to time out of sheer respect for the genius who dares to contravene its laws. The critics of France rejoiced in the harmonic emancipation of Claude Debussy. One of them writes: "We celebrated the cure of certain infected chords that had never been allowed to appear in society without first being subjected to humiliating 'preparations' and were bound to accept inflexible 'resolutions.' With apparent nonchalance this friend of poets and painters turned the geography of music upside down." After the Russian visit it was written of him in a French magazine: "The Germanic charm was broken against this living, free, picturesque music. A second journey to Bayreuth turned him forever from the idol that had so harmed the music of France." This was written by Mallarmé.

But then they go on, these critics, writing between 1910 and 1913,—may I show you what I have found in French magazines of those years? "He is a profound image of modernity; he is modernity. One might almost say that today Debussy is all there is of music (*toute la musique*). Music is Debussy!"

It is no wonder that Vuillermoz wrote in *Le*



*Grand Revue* in 1913 that if Mozart could give us his opinion, the fate of a composer at the beginning of the twentieth century would look much more desirable to him than that of a contemporary of Marie Antoinette. Now let us try to penetrate the secret of Debussy's charm. Laloy writes of him explaining the charm thus: "The notes and the lines are exalted to the point of being mingled in the original emotion. These (referring to the second book of Preludes) have a clear form, which nevertheless only follows the line of the thought. It is as if the thought were born musical, or rather music itself. Chopin showed the way. It was given to Debussy to find the goal." So we have a composer whose thought creates its own forms! Laloy continues, anticipating Mr. Cyril Scott: "Tonality is the basis of classicism. The Symphony is a tonal edifice erected according to fixed laws. Everything conspires to affirm the tonality." We all know—so many bars in the "tonic," so many bars of the "dominant," "development," "recapitulation," all revolving round the fixed center. A change of location of that center we call a change of tonality, while it is really, with our equal temperament, merely a change of pitch. Tonality, in exotic music, is fundamental arrangement of tones; a matter of proportion. Laloy continues: "In Asia there is an infinite number of tonalities. Thus Europe, enclosed in a unisonal system, has surrendered to the impetuous invasion of Oriental scales that have come as regenerative agencies. The first to use them were the Russians, since their folklore was Slavonic, almost

Oriental. But the honour of extending this new inspiration right across Europe belongs to Debussy. He introduced the Orient into music. With him classicism is dead form." This contrast drawn by Laloy between the "classic" and the "Oriental" is novel and important.

If I am to take your hands and help you find the needle Claude Debussy in the haystack of modern music, it might be well first to locate the haystack. I think it is not starred as a noteworthy object on tours through colleges or conservatories of music. But it is very noteworthy. It is a larger haystack than perhaps you know. On one side modern music touches antiquity, on another posterity; a third side is bounded by the physical or scientific and the fourth by the superphysical or religious. Such is our Haystack of Modern Music.

Let me explain. As for antiquity: To music in all ancient civilizations a divine origin is attributed. In Finland music is supposed to have come through the God Wainominen; and in India Sarasvahta the spouse of Brahma placed the Vina or sacred instrument in the hands of Nared. The world-wide concept of the divinity of this art appears to be due to the superphysical or magical powers ascribed to music. It is invocational, perhaps evocational. This is the corner of the haystack where the side called antiquity meets the side called the superphysical. Now about the middle of the sixteenth century the modes or tonal arrangements different from the patterns of our major and minor scales came into disuse for secular music in Europe. They were conserved in certain places, namely, the Greek

and Roman Catholic churches and the folk-song of Slavonic and Celtic countries, so we have them now to use as the warp of our new musical fabric together with the threads of our new scholarship spun during these three hundred years. For during this length of time, being practically limited to the major and minor scale arrangements, we have given ourselves to their development.

Both melody and harmony arise from the mode used. Melody and harmony are two of the four factors of music. The other two are rhythm and timbre. As for timbre, you may call it quality or colour if you like. As a usable factor, it is a characteristic of Occidental music. Oriental music has monotony of colour because quality as a calculated factor in musical effect is a matter either of key-relationship, or of overtones due to polyphony and sympathetic vibration. And only in Western music is there either modulation from one key to another or the symphonic development called polyphony.<sup>1</sup>

Unless one links Russia with the Oriental world, it is obviously unfair to credit Debussy with having brought the Orient into European music. France is a better center of distribution for ideas than Russia, both on account of the language in which its periodicals are printed and because of the social and

<sup>1</sup> "The sarangi player follows the voice, but during pauses and sometimes while the song continues, he indulges in florid passage of his own. . . . The heterophony of the Greeks, which is dimly suggested by the sarangi player's methods, was an anticipation of the great system of counterpoint and its offshoot harmony which have been developed to the highest pitch by the musicians of Europe."—*The Ragas of Hindustan*, published by the Philharmonic Society of Western India. Poona, 1918.

commercial intercourse between its capital and the capitals of other countries. Debussy did not antedate "the Five" who gave Russian music its place in the world today.<sup>1</sup>

So far, then, his fame rests not on having introduced but on popularizing the forgotten modes, and on flying in the face of harmony books. But new basic arrangements of tones necessitate transgression of laws made for the major and minor modes. Resolutions of the 13th are different, cadences are different, because tonics and scale tones are different. We no longer find VI, II, V, I agreeable and soporific as that well-worn cadence is in the routine-taught music. It is amazing that Debussy with his sense of the novel did not go further.

In 1898, twenty-three years ago, he wrote the *Chansons de Bilitis*, referred to by Chennevière as delicate and voluptuous visions of the radiant decadence of Greece. There is no emotion in this sort of music. The *cri de cœur* that goes with the *crise de nerfs* died out with Strauss in Germany and Tschaikowski in Russia. Emotion in art has become either attenuated to a mental extract or exalted to a mystic ecstasy—the first in France, the second in Russia; and as an exquisite attenuation of French sentiment, let me commend to you these four songs of Bilitis by Pierre Louÿs that Debussy set to music.

In these songs he has not abolished the major and minor modes. He follows the vowel colour in the poem with subtlety and he uses many enharmonic devices, like his celebrated contemporaries; but the

<sup>1</sup> Borodin, Cui, Balakireff, Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff.

content of his art at that time was truly revealed in one of the French eulogies: "Voluptuous, corporeal, naturalistic—that is the Debussy art. He sings beauty concrete, the soul of the universe." That was the spirit of his country in those *fin de siècle* days. Here is another discourse upon his art by one of his reviewers: "Most of us are not prepared to receive this ideal communion with so delicate a soul and such high sensibilities. We are not used to these agglomerations of sound. We shrug the shoulders. Oh, essence of laziness! *A quoi bon?* Oh, words thrice cowardly! Debussy has rejuvenated music. He has transformed the fundament (tonality), the inspiration, the form. With one stroke of his genius he has accomplished this metamorphosis." But let us not forget that it was in the early 70's that Bourgault Ducoudray published his "Chansons de Grèce et d'Orient," "hoping to extend the horizon of tonality," he said, "among the musicians of Europe." And pedagogically his work is being carried on now by his disciple Maurice Emmanuel and by the school of Jaques Dalcroze.

Debussy's gift to Tonality was rather *La gamme par tons*—the whole-tone scale—which, it is said, he heard sung by the Javanese at the Paris Exposition in 1896.

Our one mode, the major, had been dressed up in greater and greater variety of clothes (called accidentals and modulations) until beyond what Richard Strauss gave her, there seemed nothing more her frame could carry; so quite naturally there has been a reversion to Simplicity. Modern

music looks complicated only when we suspect it of being the old music more thickly disguised.

Now from the superphysical side of our haystack we see powerful correspondences with tonal arrangements in Egyptian and Greek music. These have been revived in this twentieth century, but not so much by Debussy as by the Russians. Debussy has used the ancient modes for colour. And in colour he excels. His whole-tone scale, however, is the one that lends most characteristic colour to his music.



The triads made in that scale are always augmented.



I mean the triad is always half a tone bigger than the major chord.



Now in this music founded on the whole-tone scale, if you hear it without an understanding of the material it is made of, you have much the same feeling as when in the streets of Paris the only word you understand is the one that sounds like English.



In 1904 Debussy became known in the pianistic world through his first "modern" pieces,<sup>1</sup> and in 1910 he published the first book of Preludes. Russia had its great composers and its great pianists and its great publishers, but Russia was remote from the thought of Europe. The one great piano teacher outside of Russia was Leschetitzki in Vienna, whose repertoire fatigued us, although his genius for discovering technical means of presenting it, dominated us. Another excellent man was Matthay in London. Godowski and Sauer had original ways of manipulating the piano keyboard; but the discerning musicians went to Paris. Blanche Selva, the celebrated pupil of d'Indy, had already given six recitals in a week in London, showing us new resources of the instrument. When I said to her: "But it does n't sound like a piano," she answered with some surprise, "But that is the aim of all of us, is it not?" Paris was not far from London, and the London recital programs came to include numbers by Claude Debussy. In 1913 appeared his second volume of Preludes. All this music had to be rendered with a new use of our human mechanism if we wished to make it sound as it sounded in Paris; because the old, clear, pianistic resonance precluded the sympathetic vibrations necessary to produce the overtones required for the beauty of the harmonies that the whole-tone scale had generated. So the honour is really due to Debussy for imbuing piano-playing with a certain distinctive charm. There were artists and there were amateurs who had instinctively used

<sup>1</sup> Laloy, "Claude Debussy."



that charm in their rendering of Chopin, of Liszt and even of Schumann; but in Debussy's music it was indispensable.

The Delphic Dancers and the Sacred Procession, published in 1910, are said to have been inspired by Greek bas-reliefs. There is internal evidence to bear out the statement. These compositions are unfortunately rarely heard. It is easy to imagine here the influence of Debussy's friend Erik Satie, for there is a smooth chordal sequence moving in stately fashion that is more like the "Sonneries de la Rose-Croix" than like the free fancy of Debussy.

In writing of Debussy, Lawrence Gilman has remarked that while certain of the roots of his music strike deep into the fertile soil of Wagner, yet the product is altogether his own. The things he learned from Wagner aside from "potency of dissonant combinations, of chromatic relations, of structural flexibility," are voices resolving anywhere and unlawfully frequent modulations. In "Clair de Lune" you will find a pretty souvenir left by the Rhine Maidens. This composition is an excellent example of Debussy's piano art: subtle, sensuous, lacking in real fervour, lacking in rhythmic invention, lacking in harmonic fertility, when you take into consideration the free range that he allowed himself, but withal beautifully proportioned, and exercising his peculiar fascination.

Now suppose we examine certain specimens of his vocal art. He won the Prix de Rome nearly forty years ago with his opera, "L'Enfant Prodigue." He was young, still battling the dried-up pedants who

deplored his modern tendencies while awarding him the prize. That opera is the only composition of his that I know in which there is real emotion and no element of what we call decadence. It is totally different in character from his opera "*Pelléas et Mélisande*," finished twenty years later, in which there is wonderful subtlety induced by the words; for Maeterlinck's book has power. On the road toward the music of the future Debussy is a landmark; but we must work with him intelligently. He is a man to appreciate with discrimination rather than to adore.

It might be of interest to you to compare the air of "*Lia*" from *L'Enfant Prodigue* with the excerpt "*La Lettre*" from the opera *Pelléas*. These two will mark for you most readily the course of his muse's flight.

The intermediate period between these two productions is highly interesting in revealing the influences that made Debussy's art what we find it at various stages. The melodic inspiration is not remarkable, and the rhythmic figures are few. For example, the same rhythmic pattern of a tremolo of a third in sixteenth notes is used in "*Il pleure dans mon cœur*" and in the Prelude of the early group of pieces called "*Pour le Piano*"—compositions separated by many years. It is the craftsmanship, the French finesse, which we might well emulate. Instead of a mass of sound such as his foreign contemporaries used, Debussy chose "subtlety of harmonic fluidity with translucent orchestration," as Lawrence Gilman says in felicitous phrase.

In this passage from the air of "Lia" —

Ain - si les jours suivaient les jours, Et dans

*pp*

you will see a bit of the Magic Fire music by Wagner and an unconscious citation from the G minor concerto of Saint-Saëns; but these are used delicately, for his memory had as light a touch as his imagination.

*p* etc.

Again, in some of his songs we hear an echo of Reynaldo Hahn and of Massenet. He belongs to an artificial civilization where city dwellers sing the joys of the *gazon fleuri* that they never see, and

virtuous sopranos confide in French to an audience of rich acquaintances the personal experiences that they never had in English. Massenet's "Thaïs," in its celebrated Interlude called "Meditation," is close kindred to the ending of "Les Cloches" by Debussy, written in 1891. Their mode of expression at that period was more French than individual. You will also find in "Green," written by Debussy in 1913, over twenty years later, almost a replica of the last vocal phrase in the Reynaldo Hahn song, "L'heure Exquise." This illustration is a variant of it:



It is a *cliché* — a formula — usual in French song, and in the following guise is a common ending in American songs:



The French idiom, however stereotyped, is employed more exquisitely than our own; but Debussy was not sufficiently original to be free from it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Even as the section *Plus animé* of Hahn's song "Paysage Triste" might be a variation on the theme "Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre," the end of "Romance" by Debussy is

Consider the words of French songs — songs by Hahn or by Debussy or Fauré. You will find such men as Verlaine, Baudelaire, Charles Duc d'Orléans, and Pierre Louÿs to be the inspiration of modern French song.

Poetry, not for its intellectual concepts but for the music indwelling between the little letters as the mind attends, will make the songs of a people.

The thought of the community makes the words in the people's hearts. The language of a country makes its song writing. Its song writing develops into its operas. Maeterlinck's mind was trained in scholastic, classical and mystical tradition, and he wrote the book of "Pelléas and Mélisande." Its beauty and literary quality found their response in the heart of Debussy, and the opera was born. Musically one of the strongest characteristics of this opera is that it is written entirely as a recitative. The words make the rhythm; not only the little rhythmic patterns, but the flow. Other men in France had written whole songs in recitative, but Pelléas is the only opera ever written entirely in this form. If in Debussy's *Clair de Lune* you hear a reminder of the Rhine maidens, he may owe a debt of gratitude for Pelléas to Wagner's pioneer work in breaking a path for opera in free form. Why do we talk of Free Form? Has any historic artist ever used the forms of his predecessors as they came to his hand? I wonder if the spirit of art is ever obliging enough to conform to a previously made mould without being coerced by a pre-

near kindred to the end of "Sourdine" by Hahn. As Hahn drew from folk-song, Debussy drew from Hahn.

conceived idea of limitation on the part of the artist.

We speculate sometimes as to the enduring quality of Claude Debussy. Laloy may help us to formulate an opinion. "Do you really believe in the immobility of works of art? Those that seem everlasting, are they not just dried flowers of an herbarium? Have they not been subjected to a sort of sterilization to brave the test of the centuries, and do you not think that their real perfume as living flowers is practically unknown to us? There is a mysterious instant when creation—realization—of art responds exactly to the aspirations of a people or a time." Laloy goes on to say: "For the first time perhaps, in its hunt for genius, man has discovered one in full vigour of his youth and captured him alive. For the first time poor humanity—that always gets up too late!—has lost nothing of that elfin moment when the sun rises. Let the conscience of our time be at rest: it has not committed the sin of waiting too long to thank the gods for Claude Debussy." It would perhaps be ungracious to call to mind those whom the world has acclaimed in their little hour. Let us hear what else this eulogist in an excellent French magazine has to say of the musical hero of the day: "He came at the precise moment when the evolution of painting and of literary schools rendered intelligible to the French sensibilities his subtle discourse." Ah, that is just the point! If the creative artist be not in his time in advance of the sensibilities of his people, they will all too soon be in advance of him. The artist must carry the torch.



There is musical content and there is musical manner. The content varies but little throughout the centuries, save when a new era sets in; but manner changes with the decade. Salon music, music that is very lovely but in essence neither high nor deep, meets in all periods with instant approval but is of brief duration in the minds of men. If in such compositions as *La Puerta del Vino* and *Mandoline* Debussy had possessed a wider vision, it would have lent variety to the rhythms employed.<sup>1</sup> The stringed instruments have always been entertaining as a subject of imitation by the piano. The vocal line is not especially distinguished in *Mandoline*, and as a composition it is not better than the Moszkowski *Guitarre* if you judge them by the historic estimate, as Matthew Arnold would say, taking into consideration the twenty years intervening. In that *Prelude* from the second volume, called *La Puerta del Vino*, Debussy gives us a *Habanera* that is charming because of its enharmonic changes, its pianistic devices for tone colour, its persistent guitar accompaniment. It is an instance of the witchery that is due to his skill. But in the matter of rhythm the Russians have outdone the French. Ravel has used accents with inspired irregularity, but what I would like to call *harmonies of rhythm* belong rather to Stravinski and Scriabin. Believe me, I am not decrying Debussy, neither do I wish to detract from his just fame; but the haystack of modern music is large, and in finding Debussy as we set out to do, we must inevitably come across many other glisten-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ravel, *Alborado del Grazioso*.



ing needles. Debussy is not, after all, "toute la musique," as one reviewer claims.

In a memorable lecture by Annie Besant in London there occurred the observation that the prophet who told the world what it already knew, in more beautiful language than it was accustomed to, was crowned with laurels; while the prophet who told the world what it did not know, was stoned. A lesser mystic and a less eloquent speaker, though a remarkable person, Cyril Scott, in his book, "The Philosophy of Modernism in Music," has referred to the instant appeal made by mediocrity. It is true that mediocrity does not offend. It is something that we understand. If it be agreeably presented, we are flattered at having understood something beautiful. Whereas genius, or the result of receptivity to the creative rather than the generative spirit, often repels us because our pride is hurt at finding ourselves unequal to the task of instant comprehension. It would be assuming too much to accuse Debussy of mediocrity as a creative artist. Nevertheless, in the life pathos of Moussorgski and the spiritual exaltation of Scriabin, both of whom are on principle bare of ornamentation, almost bleak in their austerity, something was created in music. Debussy invented a new and charming manner, eminently French, in which he told us what we had known before. We had only to accustom ourselves to his language. He did not speak as a prophet.

In the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, Debussy represents mentally the end of the earlier period and technically the beginning

of the new. He had not the frank realism of his Germanic rival Strauss, nor was he an emancipated spirit like his Russian contemporary Scriabin. He had not the depth of feeling of Moussorgski in songs, or the fundamental novelty and mystical quality of Scriabin or Stravinski. He is the mental sensualist that France was at the end of the century. But Laloy says still more, and here we can agree with him heartily: "With Debussy, Spring came into the music of France. All the doors of harmony opened into gardens. It was an enchantment. Music had acquired a new smile, — she had discovered the Fountain of Youth."

Without melodic invention, devoid of rhythmic novelty, and with no great dramatic sense, Debussy was the means of opening our hearts to those others who have since come and those who may come; for he told the news with a simplicity that could be understood. Seed from everywhere in Europe was blown across the garden of his mind. And over the flowers that have sprung up there, lies the white mist of Dawn: THE DAWN OF A NEW BEAUTY IN MUSIC.

It is not to his discredit that he did not make the Dawn, as some of his overenthusiastic literary friends have claimed. It is greatly to his credit that he did not face the Sunset, either as a youth, when there was a prize to be won, or later when, as Yeats has said, one is more concerned with the fruits than the flowers.

Debussy had a great gift and responsibility in his sense of emancipation for music, which, had he been born ten years later, he might more completely have

fulfilled. He had the requisite scholarship. He seems to me *à la fin des fins*, a spirit freed, that chooses only to linger in moonlit courtyards enjoying vicariously the scenes of lovers' meetings: an æsthetic soul content with shadows, not bravely advancing like Scriabin, nor returning like Moussorgski to view sorrow with compassion.

Being exploited by publishers and teachers, Debussy is given an importance in the modern musical world that might well be diffused. Ravel is his superior in ensemble writing; the Russians excel him in poignancy of expression in their songs. The young Englishmen have more vigour. The ten Sonatas of Scriabin cause one to wonder what great or deep impression was left by Debussy on the highway of pianoforte literature. The orchestral works of Delius, the operas of Moussorgski, the Symphonies of Scriabin, may perhaps be greater monuments to the creative genius of our time than the largest forms of composition that Debussy has left. His lasting value will, it seems to me, lie in the fact of his being a pioneer in the *household trail* leading away from the German music previously exploited; and the creative imagination of the English-speaking countries, at least, will take the path that he has indicated rather than the one previously well traveled, because of the unconscious memory of sister's singing and the grand piano at home.

## RHYTHM

**R**HYTHM is in the year and its seasons recurrently flowing. Time is their marking off into days and hours. Calendars change, but the silent procession of the seasons goes on, regardless of man's reckoning. Was ever the Equinox changed by Gregory or Julian? Does Spring hop into Summer on a given day with an "accent"? Let flow our music as the seasons flow.

You feel that you want an "accent" on the first beat? Very well, what kind? What is the "first beat"? Perhaps one might call it an appearance. Let us say the dancer leaps from off-stage and lands on the scene upon that first beat. Does he stand there, or land there with a bang? He appears in an unbroken flight from non-appearance — there could not be a cut in the rhythm or the time before his landing. And the end of that leap is a beginning. This involves elasticity, a rebound to the next thing and the next and the next. That continuous motion is a manifestation of Rhythm. It is not monotonous or fatiguing to muscle or to sense, because it is resilient: alternate expansion and contraction, alternate action and passivity. Yet it is not fifty per cent action and fifty per cent passivity; rather would I say it is ninety-nine per cent the passive alertness of the wild animal, and one per cent lithe spring. The spring must be to passive alertness again.

Then, suppose you are a dancer already on the scene, a musician in the midst of the composition. Your accent on the first beat may not be the end of a leap, in that case. Try an agogic accent—a pathetic accent—a quantitative accent, at the top or the bottom or the middle of things. You have run up—wait a bit; you have gone down—stop to turn round; you have come to a middle—give us an instant's time to realize it is the middle. The Russian opera accents its star by isolation; from the topmost balcony the star is visible. That is because a little space is left all round the star. It is a beautiful form of accentuation. It is like a deep breath on the first day of Spring.

The great cosmic stream as it courses through the arts is called Rhythm. The channels by means of which it flows we call rhythms, and the measurement of those moulds that take the flow we call meter. In one brief lecture there must of necessity be a very limited survey of these, and my only wish is to lead you to discover metrical forms for yourselves. Let them not become stagnant basins, but remain open conduits for the unbroken flow of Rhythm. To measure Rhythm by its mould would be to confound the life of a man with his stature.

I understand, not from books but from what is called direct instruction, given to one of my friends, that Rhythm is not mathematical any more than all law is mathematical, but is manifested on the earth plane as mathematical in order to be conceivable. Vibration, I am told, is only another earth-explanation and not Rhythm itself, for Rhythm is a Law.

Let us begin then by conceiving Rhythm as a

law — a law of motion. We might assume that the movement is spiral, because we know from experience that we return, not to the same spot, but to one analogous. It seems to me always that I return lifted above the spot that the present one resembles; that I am not in the old place but can look down upon it and relate it to the enriched experience of the present. This movement, which may be at its center merely static or potential energy, manifests to us as vibration; simple, and by degrees infinitely complex; and the greatest complexity here (corresponding to our number 7, the largest integral unit) is, I am told, the 1 or beginning on the next plane of consciousness. That subtle motion of our being represented by the number 7 produces a sensitized condition which we know as perfect love in its highest aspect. This has little, I suppose, of what is called practical value for music students; but before leaving this phase of the subject let me show you what was written by the scientist, mystic and musician, Alexander Scriabin, at the outbreak of the war in Europe:

“The history of races is the expression at the periphery of the development of a central idea, which comes to the meditating prophet and is felt by the creative artist, but is completely hidden from the masses. The development of this idea is dependent upon the Rhythm of the individual attainments, and the periodic accumulation of creative energy acting at the periphery, produces the upheavals whereby the evolutionary movement of races is accomplished. These upheavals (cataclysms, catastrophes, wars, revolutions, etc.), in shaking the souls of men, open



them to the reception of the idea hidden behind the outward happenings."

The "Rhythm of individual attainment" is something to be pondered by the individual. To cast aside the superficial activities of the mind which make him appear to the seeing observer like a little cork bobbing about on top of the water,—this is the first thing. In the repose and peace of his own soul each individual must find his essential being, his enduring and individual self; and this will swing into its own harmonious rhythm in the great cosmic movement, affecting necessarily all lesser and transitory matters.

In each art Rhythm presents a different manifestation. May I show you two charts, two studies in Rhythm of design made by a student under Mr. George Hamilton at the Detroit School of Design? Remember, Rhythm is to our sense a progress. You musicians have, I hope, during the past few minutes been released from the idea that Rhythm is the recurrent metrical beat, so many to a minute. Our measurement of time must be all wrong; it doesn't match the facts of nature. This morning the sun rose at seven by your watch. Your watch keeps perfect time. But does the sun rise at seven by your watch tomorrow? Not at all; it has made an *accelerando* and rises at six fifty-six. What! is the sun irregular? Ah, no! it has a Rhythm through the years; and on its own good day it rises again when your watch marks seven. The watch had no life; it was but a puppet that had to stand in one spot and jerk its little arms until the planets came home from their long journey. Poor little clock,



made by man! Would you have your music comport with the clock, or be one with the motion of the stars?

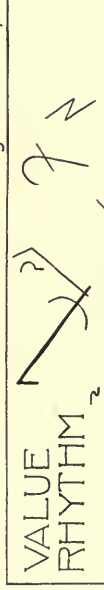
This first chart is an exposition of Rhythm in several aspects relative to design,—Rhythm of value, of direction, of measure, of interval, of form. In this connection we are using eight line elements and dealing with them rhythmically. When we employ these line elements for Rhythm of measure, then Rhythm is designedly lacking in value, direction, interval and form. We have isolated the one factor of measure in which to demonstrate Rhythm. So in isolating value (intensity), that alone of all the possibilities for Rhythm in the pattern will be employed rhythmically. So with each of the five. In the small design at the side of the chart, Rhythm is used in all,—in value, in direction, measure, interval and form. All these factors working together without a picture in mind, serve of themselves to suggest a pictorial design. (Chart 1.)

In the second chart, which uses beside these factors another element called hidden balance or occult balance, those same line elements with which we began have evolved into a design that we would say had beauty. (Chart 2.)

In a third chart, an evolution of the previous ones, the flowing rhythms of various factors in design served to produce a real picture; for through the activity of the imagination Rhythm called into being forms that were harmonious. It would have been a very difficult thing to draw those several forms in the picture without their clashing rhythmically. As it is, the shallow curve of the arm in

# PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

LINE ELEMENTS.  $\Delta$   $\sim$   $\times$   $\nabla$



# PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

## OCCULT BALANCE



CHART 2

a figure at the right becomes by progressive degrees the double curve of a kneeling figure at the left: Rhythm of form. You will find this same kind of development in Chopin and in Scriabin. I cannot at present find it consistent with the classic tradition in music, which overemphasizes the rhythmic element known in the art of design as "harmony," but which we would call identity.

The rhythmic factor known in design as "harmony" is used very beautifully in Chopin's prelude in F sharp minor.

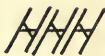


An octave leap ↗

A short interval — northeast ↗

A short interval — southeast ↘

An octave leap ↗

making 

One might embroider that prelude. The pattern varies but it never changes.

In music there are vibrational and numerical patterns through which Rhythm flows. These are not necessarily in twos and threes. I will show you presently some very pretty patterns; but first I want

to talk to you a moment about those five aspects of Rhythm itself in terms of the art of design. The nomenclature is very similar to that in music. Value, Direction, Measure, Interval, Form: V, D, M, I, F.

V, Value, equals intensity or strength; D, Direction, too rarely considered as musical Rhythm; M, Measure, length of the pattern. In music the same term might be used. The repeated four-bar phrase lacks this element of Rhythm, unless direction is a natural outpouring, as, for example, in the case of Chopin. Without direction the four-bar phrase lacks flow and life, or the sense of continuity. I, Interval, equals spacing; that is, *ritenuto* or *accelerando*: space between tones.<sup>1</sup> It may be such aural space, or it may be a Rhythm of what we would call in music "Interval." There are fine examples of the aural spacing, the thing that would be called in design Interval, at the end of the lesser works of Brahms and of MacDowell. I do not mean the doubling or halving of note durations which we call expansion or contraction; I mean the gradual motion that the composer hopes for when he writes *accelerando* or *ritenuto*. F, Form, equals the musical pattern itself. Not "form" as we know it in music, which in design would be called "composition," but a musical figure or pattern.

As you saw in the illustrations, any one of these factors of Rhythm may be present to the exclusion of the others. If all are present there is grace and flow of a perfect manifestation of the art-concept.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 54, *Noh*, by Fenollosa-Pound, published by Knopf, 1918.

In a book by Lawrence Binyon called "The Flight of the Dragon," the six canons of Chinese art are quoted which were formulated in the sixth century by Hsieh Ho. Of these the first canon is Rhythmic Vitality. Aside from his footnotes of elucidation Mr. Binyon generously gives us further explanation on a succeeding page:

"The first of these canons is the all-important one; for the others are concerned rather with the means to attain the end which the first defines. 'Rhythmic Vitality' is Professor Giles's translation; but, though terse and convenient, it does not seem quite to cover the full meaning of the original phrase. Mr. Okakura<sup>1</sup> renders it, 'The Life-movement of the Spirit through the Rhythm of things'; or, again, one might translate it, 'The fusion of the rhythm of the spirit with the movement of living things.'

"At any rate, what is certainly meant is that the artist must pierce beneath the mere aspect of the world to seize and himself to be possessed by that great cosmic rhythm of the spirit which sets the currents of life in motion."

At the Anthroposophical center at Dornach near Basle, a school of Christian mysticism, Rudolph Steiner is said to have evolved rhythmic dances to the vowels. Jaques Dalcroze has made a really exhaustive study of the subject of Rhythm with regard to the clear mental image attained through bodily movements. This of course would go into the field of the plastic arts, though originating in

<sup>1</sup> A most distinguished art-connoisseur of Japan.

music, and has in some instances led to painting as the chosen pursuit of his students. If Rhythm were the mensural beat, how would painting have rhythm? I have read that the arts of repose, the plastic arts, present symmetry in a higher degree than music because they alone persist in space and endure long contemplation. But in dealing with essences and not images, the factor of temporal duration is eliminated. The essence is outside that realm, and no less a person than Plutarch writes that the Pythagorean number according to which the distribution of the original Essence or world-soul occurs, is connected with a certain arrangement of tones in the octave. The theory of such correspondence is that by the distribution of the original Essence all things are related in that Essence, and thus have correspondences according to various aspects represented. On a familiar plane it is like the rattling of a picture frame somewhere in the room when a certain note is struck on the piano. These would be related in vibration; and this is a true analogy, for vibration, we were told, was an "earth explanation" of Rhythm, which was a Law.

Rhythm is not periodicity, but Rhythm has periodicity. In a manuscript by J. Landseer Mackenzie occur the following statements: "Rhythm is a law which governs and works through the senses. Rhythm is the law that connects feeling and idea."

Now for the pretty patterns in music that we call rhythms. A rhythm of fives is interesting: there are many arrangements. Arenski used a simple form in his concerto, Opus 2.





Later, in Opus 28, he made experiments in the rhythms of ancient Persian, Greek and Roman poetry which he called Experiments in Forgotten Rhythms. Of these I would like to show you the one in a rhythm of five. It is called Péons—and that has neither to do with the slaves in Mexico, I hasten to add, being frequently asked, nor with the French word for peacock. It has rather to do with punch and the Pentateuch; for just as the Pentateuch has five books, Punch is borrowed from the Persian word that indicates the five ingredients in the beverage. So Péons is the French word for this rhythm of five, and Arenski has used the Cretic form.



Scriabin, in Opus 67, has used five as an integral beat, which is rare.



Albeniz in a little piece called Zortzico has broken up the five beats in a charming Spanish fashion.



In a book by Seale (published in London, 1823), there is this analysis of Greek meters of five:

Paeon primus	— ∪ ∪ ∪	χαλκὸδέτᾱ
Paeon secundus	∪ — ∪ ∪	Ἐπῶνϋμέ
Paeon tertius	∪ ∪ — ∪	τέλεσᾱντᾱ
Paeon quartus	∪ ∪ ∪ —	θεοὔγενῆς

Then, too, Rhythm can swing through one form after another freely, as our modern music and the uninfluenced folk music of certain races allow it to do.<sup>1</sup>

The free rhythm of church composers assumed a definite shape when music had to be fitted to

<sup>1</sup> See v. Hornbostel's records from the island of Nissan, quoted by Stumpf, "Die Anfänge der Musik." Published by Barth, Leipzig.

metrical lines instead of Latin prose: meter instead of quantity. Even the Gregorian music being presented in the Western Catholic cathedrals at the present time has a hidden metrical pulsation when the Latin words are rhymed.

Among the Troubadours, coming late as they did, 1150 to 1300, with their Latin-French, three rhythms alone were used: iambic,  $\cup -$ , trochaic,  $- \cup$ , and the dactyl,  $- \cup \cup$ . If your memory has confused these, they can readily be illustrated by Hello Frisco, The Merry Widow Waltz and the old tune called "Long, Long Ago."

Our own English language and the German, to which it largely owes its origin and its songs, have had a devastating influence on Rhythm. The poetical meters, aided by the cudgel of the end-rhyme, drove the music into little squares. The sole alternative to the little square was the little skip or hop. So what we generally know as folk-song is in a naturalistic and mimetic meter made in sympathy with a bodily swaying of extreme joy or grief, or the motion of a cradle or the imitation of a horse's gallop. This is the human-emotional element, the forerunner of the mensural beat or the limited thing that we used to call Rhythm. Now to correlate all of this, one might suggest that as folk-song represents physical rhythm, so folk-thought represents physical well-being; and that welfare beyond the physical comes as inspiration to the individual known as the seer, whether he be saint or artist. This is the reason it has been said that the saint and artist are one in essence, like mirrors held in the right and left hand, reflecting divinity. In Occidental

folk-song, thesis and accent almost invariably coincide, and this makes a jolt, a bump, an impediment if you will, that is fairly representative of the interrupted flow of the great Rhythm of Life. For most of the folk-song we know has to do with battle, poison, death or lovers' quarrels; and if it is a really grand example, it has to do with all four.

One salient parallel between ultramodern and archaic music is noticeable in American ragtime. Thesis and accent do not coincide. The intensely interesting dynamic and quantitative accents of ragtime are at variance with all north-European tradition. If as Kawczynski says, the lively and rapid rhythms of our dance have rendered false our idea of rhythm, it is poetic justice that through our more modern dance of the sophisticated interpretative school on the one hand, and the primitive elisions, syncopations and anticipations of vulgar custom on the other, we are recovering the lost idea of Rhythm as an unending flow. The body is once again, as among primitive peoples, a subtle vehicle of energy.

One reason for the popularity of Debussy among professionals is his rhythmic simplicity. By the same token, it will be a long time before Scriabin becomes popular in the same sense. The songs of Debussy look complicated, but are founded strictly on the mensural beat of binary or ternary divisions that are as simple as a gas heater. They require just the same form of everyday courage in approaching them boldly to light them up. Debussy never uses an archaic rhythm, to my knowledge, such as the Irish Rann, which is one of the rhythms of seven. An example of this rhythm is given by

a distinguished writer as possibly the first Irish strophe in this form. It is easy to remember because it is in a rhythm of seven dating from the seventh century. This example is to be found in "l'Antiphonaire de Bangor," spelled Benchuir by the Irish family for whom the strophe was written:

VERSICULI FAMILIAE BENCHUIR

Benchuir bona regula,  
Recta atque divina,  
Stricta, sancta, sedula  
Summa, justa, ac mira.

You will find this ancient rhythm trailing underneath the "Air du Grand Prieur," written for the order of the Rosicrucians in Paris by Erik Satie, a man greatly misunderstood.

There are many arrangements of seven possible. Here are some quoted by Seale as Greek meters:

Epitritus primus	υ — — —	Ἀνικητῶν
Epitritus secundus	— υ — —	Εὐρεθέντων
Epitritus tertius	— — υ —	Σωτηρίᾱς
Epitritus quartus	— — — υ	Φωνῆσάσᾱ

And there are seven others, less in use.

Mrs. Kennedy Fraser has published among her Hebridean folk-songs this lovely milking song with the little double beat coming in fascinating places:



An early work by Stcherbatcheff is called a Dancing Chorus, and employs a seven that has its double beat on two and four in one bar and one and four in the next, with charming effect. The piece is in a rhythm of nine not divided in threes. It has phrases in a rhythm of seven moving so smoothly that you will hardly notice the variation in pattern. The interesting thing about this particular rhythm of nine is its division into 1, 1-2, 1-2-3-4, 1-2. In general usage the first of two is a down beat. Here it is an up beat, at the same time an accent: the accent on the anacrusis, which gives continuity.



So long as rhythm is considered dependent on bodily swaying or the dance or any physical thing, it is no wonder that the poet with his finer sense of rhythmic values assumes superiority over the musician.

Like many departures from the recognized, I find our ultramodern music sharply divided into two orders: on the one hand it is more fundamentally true than the music of the immediate past, and on the other hand it is a departure from the recognized without a goal. We need not be concerned about this latter phase of music, for the fungus growth will disappear as it has done in other epochs.

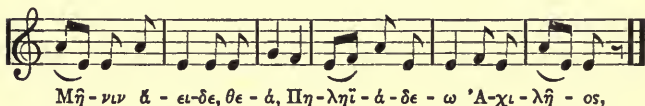


In a review of twentieth-century music by an important writer for the *Musical Quarterly* it was said that our conditions of life demand an entirely new form of artistic expression. Is art then, after all, but another presentment of external, ephemeral existence? Conditions of life have little to do with the man through whom art comes into being among us. Kawczynski has written: "Every invention in art or science, like invention in general, is always individual and personal, proceeding from a mind superior in some way to the rest, which follow it. The national idea, that the inventor is only the annunciator, robs that superior mind of the merit of his vigils, his labors, and his thought, to divide it amongst the crowd who are ignorant of the difficult art of meditation." This brings to mind the words of Goethe: "Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille, sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt." You remember Claude Bragdon's words: "This is the essence of art, first to perceive and then to publish news from that nowhere of the world from which all things flow, and to which all things return." And even Plato observed that one should note which rhythms express license, pride, madness or other evil. For the good of the state Plato wished music in this regard to be regulated by state authority. I would like to tell you of an instance where a rhythm had power. At a recital at a country club in New Jersey I played the Prelude by Scriabin that bears the caption "Sauvage — belliqueux." This Prelude is made in a rhythm of ferocity almost mimetic in its suggestion. (Incidentally, if that piece were played with the metro-



nome it would lose entirely its rhythmic value.) A few days later, two little children in the town were seen crouching, and with a sudden sound and violence they would spring dangerously one upon the other. A passer-by remonstrated: "Children, what are you doing?" "We are playing savage and warlike," they said. My friend remembered Plato and walked on.

According to Aristoxenus and Denys d'Halicarnasse, as quoted by Kawczynski, the Greek accents ran within a fifth, and the musical element in the pronunciation of Greek formed the melody. On the authority of that disciple of the ancients I give you this rendering of the first line of the Iliad:<sup>1</sup>



The Chinese say, "Prosody is the image of music." In other words, vowels and consonants would be chosen with regard to (1) the length they measure or (2) the force they demand or (3) the lift they give. And there we have the three dimensions of rhythm. It flows lengthwise, slowly or rapidly. Dynamic stress or force of breath cuts across and gives the second dimension. Rise and fall known as chromatic stress gives the third dimension. So Rhythm, like the cosmos, has to our senses three dimensions. It probably has, however, as many dimensions as we are able to perceive. Repeat to yourself in a perfectly even,

<sup>1</sup> Essai sur l'origine et l'histoire des Rhythmes — Maximilien Kawczynski.

straight, uninflected line this phrase: "If I should say to you paintings are beautiful." Now merely in the flow of the length of the vowels, without lifting the voice up or down and without accent by force of breath, there is rhythm. Then use the second dimension of Rhythm by cutting across that stream with force of breath, which we call dynamic accent, and say, still without rise or fall, "IF I should SAY to you PAINTINGS are BEAUTIFUL." There you have two dimensions of Rhythm. Now try the third by leaving your voice loose and free to rise or fall where rhythmic stress spontaneously comes. The third, according to Kawczynski, is the chromatic accent of the Greeks, and this will explain to you the first line of the Iliad as noted above.

Do not think that I am digressing from the purpose of this Conférence. Melody and rhythm are indissolubly allied when Rhythm is considered from this standpoint, and much in ultramodern music that might ordinarily sound tuneless and vague to you from another point of view will in this aspect reveal its proper meaning. For with the best of the moderns, as with the American Indian, "the sense of interval yields to the need of utterance." Not that it has ever failed to do so among the inspired musicians. It is the uninspired who have enslaved musical utterance, and frequently during the past era of music, a stereotyped form deftly handled has given undue authority to a composer and an unwarrantable number of lifeless copies to the world.

That distinguished dramatic critic, the late Charles Caffin, told me that when he heard the Russian players in New York without understanding

their language he was fascinated with the rhythm. One actor would establish a rhythm in a phrase, toss it to another actor who caught it and changed it to his mood and passed it on to another.

The countries of the Romance and Slavic languages have more variety in the rhythm of their music because of the greater flexibility of the native speech. Did you ever see an old quilt of the feather pattern? It is made by creating a design of long flowing lines like an ostrich plume through the use of little fine needle stitches all in white like the cloth. A fine Marseilles quilt is probably a machine-made reproduction of it. The same relation exists between a child's patchwork quilt and this flowing free rhythm that a composition restrained by the mensural beat bears to the natural or rhapsodic build of music. The *rubato in tempo* advocated by Ysaye is a free equilibration of quantitative values within the emotional phrase. It is the too general and inartistic, uncomprehending training in the technique of instruments, and the commercial dissemination of songs, that have killed this perception of the true declamation of the phrase. The real sin is of course the artificiality of the phrase itself. Certain composers—Bizet, Liszt, Chopin, for example, among nineteenth-century musicians—spoke as bards with natural magic in the sequence. Take almost any phrase in their work excepting a frank dance measure, and if you outlined the mensural rhythm, which an artist never does unless he is scared, it would be like drawing a black border round each of the clouds in a sunset.

In hearing orchestral music that is not dance

music it is hard to discover the metrical shape. It is almost purely rhythmic when presented by a good conductor. Oriental music, as you would imagine, is not metrical at all in our sense, save where it is a dance measure. A Rice Song was sung for me in San Francisco by a Japanese woman, a song for planting time. You will see in it some of the rhythmic elements of design.

## YAMATO-MAI



In the next *Conférence* of this course, *Parallels* between Ultramodern Music and Poetry, perhaps you will feel with me the Eastern trend of our life and art in the twentieth century. In this connection I must tell you one of the things I learned from a Sufi philosopher in London: the five ways of listening to music.

The first is the common or vulgar hearing, as rag-time.

The second is the technical hearing—how it is done.

The third is the scientific hearing—how it is made.

The fourth is the emotional hearing.

The fifth is the mystical hearing, in which there is loss of self, as in prayer.

What music that you know is so perfect that you can listen to it in each of those five ways? Is it necessary to put up with second-class art? Why dull our senses with things that we have to condone? If we are to "standardize" music, let us first have a standard!

Remembering, then, that Rhythm involves not so much the recurrent beat as (1) the recurrent phrase, (2) the shape and (3) direction of the phrase, (4) the dynamic value, (5) the spacing between tones, and (6) the related *accellerandi* and *ritenuti*, let me recommend to you a new examination of the old music you love best, to discover hidden beauty and balance, and a sympathetic glance at the new.

Rhythm and time seem to me like air and æther, occupying to our senses the same space. A charming Irish lady calling upon me in London talked for a while about my concert. Then turning to me shyly she said, "Do ye now, — it's an odd thing to ask, — but do ye now ever have any trouble with what we call — the toime?"

If you "have trouble with the toime" buy an automatic noise to dance to; and when you take up your Nocturnes or your Preludes or your lovely songs, your Bach or your Scriabin, find what was the curved swing of the phrase that kept the composer awake till he wrote it, cursing the while, you may be sure, because there were no little black marks invented that could tell the Philistine just how long to hold a tone. Ah, the mould must not be distorted,

—surely any one would take the trouble to be exact about the shaping of the mould through which Rhythm flows. That is a necessary link in this chain, for these are the stages between the mind of the composer and the mind of the hearer; and only by means of these stages can music be “elevating”:

THE DREAM in the mind of the composer.

THE RECORD.

THE PERCEPTION of the dream in the heart of the artist.

THE PRESENTATION.

THE COMPOSER’S DREAM in the mind of the hearer.

To interpret the Dream by means of the poor meager record is to connect feeling and idea; and of this connection we are told that Rhythm is the Law.

## PARALLELS BETWEEN ULTRAMODERN POETRY AND ULTRAMODERN MUSIC

AS the previous chapter has dealt principally with music and relatively with its national origins, it may be well to note certain points at the outset of this chapter on Parallels Between Ultramodern Music and Ultramodern Poetry. In other words, we wish to launch out upon this subject with a clear understanding of what is new in this era, in poetry as well as in music and in their alliance. At the beginning of this century, 1902, one of the chief textbooks used in the schools of America was the "Handbook of Poetics," by Gummere. It had then been out for seventeen years, and it is quoted in textbooks used now in 1920 at our universities as if nothing had happened in the realm of poetics in thirty-five years. In the preface Mr. Gummere says, "This handbook of poetics is meant to aid the teacher in laying so necessary a foundation," and at the end of the preface he says, "Of the many books consulted, Wackernagel's 'Lectures on Poetik' and the works on meter by Child, Schipper, Ellis and Ten Brink may be named as especially helpful. The article on 'poetry' in the last volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica did not come to hand in time to be of use even in the revision of the proof-sheets." Before going further in quotations from this book,



which was one of the channels of education through which American poetry had to come, I cannot refrain from underlining the fact that the writer of an accepted textbook on poetics is acknowledging the superiority of an encyclopedia. In his preface to the second edition there occur the following paragraphs: "But the legendary and historical basis of the epic of Beowulf belongs to the end of the sixth century (cf. Wuelker, *Grundriss zur Gesch. der Ags. Litt.*, p. 206)." Then, "in Paul and Braune's *Beiträge*, Vol. IX, Professor Kluge has recently treated the history of rime in Germanic verse, and has sought to establish certain rules and tests important for the study of Anglo-Saxon meters"; and "Kluge thus adds end-rime to the tests of later composition. In regard to beginning-rime itself, it is perhaps well to add a caution about its use in modern verse. Beginning-rime, or alliteration, is detected by the ear, not by the eye. (Cf. *Englische Studien*, VIII, 390.)" On the next page we find: "Meanwhile, Schipper's recent remarks in the current volume of *Englische Studien*, 184 ff., seem very sensible. His views were set forth in his *Englische Metrik*: an attack upon them by Wissmann will be found in the *Anglia*, V, 466 ff." And this preface ends with the illuminating paragraph: "Lastly, teachers will permit the suggestion that where a class has some knowledge of French, it would be profitable to bring out the excellence of our own rhythm by comparing it with the meters of French verse." To enter this particular field of comparison equipped with an *a priori* judgment, is surely to be a losing victor in the field.

Then follows a preface to a third edition, by a few quotations from which I would emphasize the tenacity of the Germanic ideal in English poetry: "Of original work, the first place belongs to the *Poetik* of Wilhelm Scherer, a posthumous work edited by his colleague, Dr. Meyer." The nature of poetry on the next page is thus defined: "Scherer calls poetry 'the artistic application, or use (*Anwendung*), of language,' with the limitations that not all poetry is artistic application of language (e.g., Ballet, or Pantomime, both wordless, may yet be poetry); and that not all artistic application of language (e.g., a sermon, or other persuasive rhetoric) is poetry. Yet Scherer concedes that whatever is rhythmic must be assumed to be poetry, though poetry is not necessarily rhythmic. Such unrhythmic forms as must be counted under the head of poetry are in their general character always closely allied to the rhythmic forms (p. 32). Among the oldest phases of poetry are Chorus, Proverb, Tale (*Maerchen*), Charm, and Riddle. The first, the choral song of the multitude at feast or sacrifice, contains all rhythmic germs of later poetry; chorus and dance combined are the origin of rhythm. (See pp. 9, 135, of this Handbook.) Yet the primitive tale was unrhythmic; in Scherer's system, the tale, like modern romances (e.g., Scott's), counts as poetry, and so we have a door opened to what Mr. Saintsbury calls 'the pestilent heresy of prose-poetry.'"

Now if I should ask you, "What is the nature of poetry?" I think you could answer in one word quoted from the above, "Riddle."

Let us "riddle" this theory of English poetry yet more completely: "THE ORIGIN OF POETRY. Here Scherer frankly puts on the badge of Darwinism. To be sure, Schiller furnishes him the word *Spieltrieb*; or, to speak with Scherer, 'entertainment,' as the source of poetry; but for the real origin of the thing, recourse is had to Darwin's views on the expression of emotion in animals. Any exercise of one's muscles may be undertaken in order to express or give pleasure; hence our laughing, our dancing, and our singing. Singing, like birds' notes, may express pleasure and desire. The love-lyric may be led back directly to a song analogous to that of the male bird in mating time."

So Gummere would lead the gifted, impressionable young artist-soul into the Zoo to find the source of his visions! The only excuse I can find for such an authority is that he is acting ignorantly, under a spell, as a mouthpiece for the materialism of a bygone age and of a foreign land. After one more weighty reference, this time to Paul's *Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*, the preface to the third edition closed in the year 1890, and the volume including the three prefaces, beginning in 1885, is issued from the press in the year 1902, seventeen years after!

If you are interested in this subject it will not be difficult for you to ascertain what work was being done by the French poets in that year. Some of the men whose names we are just beginning to know — because they have recently died — had been flourishing for thirty years. One of them, as Amy Lowell tells us in her delightful volume, "Six French

Poets," realized that prose, rhythmic prose and verse were only a single instrument graduated; and out of this freedom has come the present general interest in the art. So much for the "pestilent heresy of prose-poetry." Mr. Gummere at the end of his book vouchsafes just forty-one lines to the subject of French forms. The last six lines read as follows: "The ingenuity, however, which is required for the construction of these stanzas makes it doubtful that they will ever voice the higher moods of poetry. The great lyric poets, like Goethe, do their best work in simple forms of verse, in that 'popular tone' nearest to the heart of singer as well as hearer."

As a contrast to what the gifted race of present poets of America were taught in school, let us note the flaming sources from which our modern students are grasping their inspiration as they soar. Fletcher in writing of the Hokku speaks of the Japanese quality of psychological suggestion. He divides the Hokku in three layers: a statement of fact, emotion deduced from the fact, and a sort of spiritual allegory: the seventeen syllables—five, then seven, then five. He adds: "The thing we have to follow is not a form but a spirit." In this twentieth century our point of view is psychological rather than biological. That English singer of Oriental songs who calls herself Ratan Devi told me that in her study of Hindu music her master made no allowance for her own shortcomings and lack of endurance. There were no convenient signs for breathing places. If you have been so fortunate as to read "Dont's for an Imagiste," in the volume of

*Poetry* for April, 1913, you will remember "Don't begin each line with a heave." In the Hindu music as Ratan Devi from personal experience explains it, whatever the phrase, so must it be rendered, and the student might repeat it again and again; but until her own endurance or skill had developed to the point of presenting the song as it was written, it was not hers to sing.

The sustained effort in Oriental song is like the carrying over of sound in the subconscious ear in modern English that is called polyphonic. The Oriental shuts out the world when he hears; and Jane Harrison says, "Only when one dares lose oneself in contemplation, can art be born." In "Mysticism and the Creed" you will find (p. 140): "Every true work of art is produced in an ecstasy in which the artist is compelled by an inner power greater than himself. Dante did not sit down and deliberately concoct the *Divina Commedia* out of his own self-conscious mind, but he saw with his immortal eye, and part of what he saw he wrote down."

The word "self-conscious" deserves a little attention at our hands. Used in the unpleasant sense in which the quality of self-consciousness asserts itself, it means only a consciousness of the *separated self*, which is "the branch cut off from the vine." The new faculty or state of mind which is occasioning so much interest at the present time in the world belongs to the nonseparated self—of which everything from a Community Chorus or a neighborhood party to a League of Nations is the shadow. The seer and the artist have been ahead of the world.

The world is catching up. The seer and the artist are still ahead. That is why we have such books as this to explain them. In that state of consciousness which produces in an artist the elimination of the sequential, both self-righteousness and self-pity are left behind. Johnson said that there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary to the comprehension of a great work of art in its full design and true proportions. There is popular curiosity about the state of mind in which seer and artist have always dwelt. The book "*Tertium Organum*," by Ouspensky, that is being widely read by intellectuals, is written ostensibly from the scientific standpoint. Unfortunately it is that kind of scientific standpoint which tries to impose conditions for happenings that are beyond its cognizance, being yet uncoded. The author even urges the desirability of subjecting our newly found powers to the will. The will is a companion of the three-dimensional concept, a servant of the separated self to smooth his path in a dangerous world. The will is no longer needed where this superior power is once achieved or invoked. With the new sight, the larger sight, one is no longer in a dangerous world. Conflict occurs which leads to various evils, even to insanity, when the personal will and the limited intellect are taken into the new realm where they do not belong.<sup>1</sup> We leave our shoes at the gate of the temple. To get our shoes again we would have to go out of the temple. We needed our shoes because the road was rough. The temple floor is smooth and they

<sup>1</sup> This is the truth back of the Roman Catholic doctrine of abnegation of the will.



who by craft or fear take their shoes in with them may slip.

It has been said that to compose poetry, and I would add music, three qualities are necessary: sensitiveness, self-knowledge and sympathy. It seems to me that the too great burden of words, like the lengthy musical form, shows a lack of sensitiveness. Intermediate steps are deleted in the present-day verse and music of even indifferent quality because of an awakened sensibility in the world at large to the language of art. The still higher sensibility of the Orient is voiced in such elisions and suggestions as you will find in the poem "Silk Stockings," by Rikahu, in the volume of translations from the Chinese called "Cathay." In contrast note this opening of a long poem by Henri de Regnier, replete with "individual emotion which is self-enhancement" (*Quelqu'un songe d'Aube et d'Ombre*):

J'ai cru voir ma tristesse, dit-il, et je l'ai vue,  
Dit-il plus bas.  
Elle était nue,  
Assise dans la grotte la plus silencieuse  
De mes plus intérieures pensées.

I do not refer to the difference in rhythm. The rhythm of each is adapted to the sentiment. The distinction here is the viewpoint, the artist's self-knowledge. Among the benefits of self-knowledge we must include the power of impersonal criticism of one's own art work. Freedom, choice and responsibility are now the watchwords. This would tend to exclude vain repetition, bombast, and the



trappings of Pegasus caparisoned. Art is after all very like life. The clarity of art lies in the elimination of the superfluous. The poignancy of art lies in the possession of stronger feelings than can be expressed. Shepard in his review of Watson for the *Dial* speaks of "our recent rejection of specialized poetic diction and all the easy-going poetic licenses and padding expletives of earlier days." This finds its parallel in music in the abandonment of what might be called piano-tuner technique and in the casting aside of diffuse and meaningless reiterations to fill a "classic" mould.

It is said of Paul Fort that, "disdainful of expected rhythms and domesticated sentiments, he has taken poetry again at its beginning." Paul Fort was a contemporary of Francis Thompson, and not only lived through the bridging of the poetic thought-stream from the old side to the new, but helped build the bridge. To appreciate the frank succinctness of him and of his followers as opposed to another school not emancipated, it is necessary only to read one sentence in the book by Francis Thompson on Shelley. Thompson was an unfortunate visionary who was given a vogue by the enthusiasm of Alice Meynell and the Catholic branch of the family of Intelligentsia. Thompson refers to a personal irregularity attributed to Shelley and delivers himself of this memorable line: "Compare with this the genuinely corrupt Byron, through the cracks and fissures of whose heaving versification steam up perpetually the sulphurous vapours from his central iniquity." Despite the great admiration on the part of many people of excellent

taste, it appears to me that where Swinburne, an original word-rhapsodist, blew bright soap bubbles of iridescent colours, Thompson merely foams at the mouth because he is not well. The beauty of directness in both poetry and music was an inevitable reaction from the nineteenth-century indulgence that went for art. Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell have done for English poetry what Bourgault Ducoudray and Eaglefield Hull have done for music. Read Hull's "Modern Harmony" and Pound's "Pavanes" and the "History of Romance," and I think you will feel this to be true. In Amy Lowell's book, "Tendencies," you can read some chosen bits by the writer who calls herself H. D. that are beautiful examples of Imagisme. In case you are not clear about that group known as the Imagistes let me quote Amy Lowell's definition, for she ought to know, being one of them herself, and their self-appointed ambassador: "Imagisme is a clear representation of what the author wishes to say. It is a presentation of the thing in the exact word necessary. The Imagistes feel themselves part of a renaissance; a renaissance, a rebirth of the spirit of truth and beauty, a rediscovery of beauty in our modern world and the originality and honesty to affirm that beauty in whatever manner is natural to the poet." It is interesting in this connection to recall that in 1709 Rowe complained regarding Shakespeare, that every one took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy. Surely a finer commentary on art is that by Benedetto Croce: "Every work of art is an organism governed solely by its own law."

Sometimes among the modern poets and musicians one can discern the parent in the offspring, as Verhaeren seems to have inherited his metric from Victor Hugo. Debussy and Ravel have no musical parent. They are slim, fine talents, thinner than César Franck, less novel than Chopin in his time. They are literally the thin end of the wedge. They have pried open the box that the Djinns of classicism sat on for half a century after Chopin's death, and, mercy! what funny things have hopped out: Goossens and Poldowski and Whithorne, with a train of little screaming cacophonists about them. But that is good. One tires of ugliness—and then one cannot go backward. That is the time one makes advance. We shall be flooded by the publishers with machine-made copies of twentieth-century music, as we have been and still are with stencilled copies of nineteenth-century patterns. As we grow weary of them we will accept new forms again, for creation will always be ahead of us.

Pierre Aubry, who reminded us that the new always has its origin in the archaic, tells us that in schools of minstrelsy, that is to say, among the Troubadours, words and music were equally considered. In this age it is once more the case. The grotesque distortion of word-rhythms by which some of the older composers—among them that excellent musician Edward Elgar—robbed their creations of all charm for the literarily minded, is now impossible since the advent of Cyril Scott, Claude Debussy and other word-sensitive men.

Another strong characteristic of artists at this

time is the group feeling. In all periods the discoverer is ahead of his age, and yet in looking back upon the history of art these people are seen in clusters. But in this twentieth century the clusters are visible without the perspective of remoteness. Indeed many truisms regarding art of former times seem no longer to hold good. Albert Heumann writes in his book "*Mouvement Littéraire Belge d'Expression Française*," that a fecund and independent literature commonly exists in a country of perfect material prosperity and of an absolute political autonomy. The fecund and independent literature which has arisen in the beginning of the twentieth century, however, has come through the new dynamic power of individuals who do not pity themselves. And musically, it came thus in Russia and in France. The young men of the new movement do not bemoan either their poverty or their exile. They chose poverty, they elected to live where their art could flourish. They are concerned not with self-expression, but with intangible beauty to which they render allegiance; and I feel safe in assuming that to some of them, such scholars and mystics are they, the following phrases which I found in a book by Bailly would not sound strange. The book by Bailly is called "*Le Chant des Vœyelles comme Invocation aux Dieux Planétaires*" :

"The vowel equals the unit in arithmetic, the point in geometry, the letter in grammar. Combined with material substance, such as the consonant, like soul with body, and harmony with strings, the result is animated beings: tones and songs, faculties productive of divine things." Then Bailly quotes

this from St. Irénée, who cites it from the Gnostic, Marcus:

- A equals the first heaven
- E equals the second heaven
- H equals the third heaven
- I the fourth heaven, which is the center
- O the fifth heaven
- T the sixth heaven
- Ω the seventh, which "is the fourth after that which is the center."

The Gnostic Marcus continues: "These powers unite in a universal hymn which they love to chant in honour of him who produced them." Quoted by Eusèbe de Césarée, Livre 5, Chapitre 14, is the following: "Les sept lettres voyelles me célèbrent, moi qui suis le Dieu impérissable; père infatigable de tous les êtres, je suis la cithare indestructible de l'univers; c'est moi qui ait trouvé l'accord harmonieux des tourbillons des cieux!" (The seven vowels celebrate me who am the everlasting God: the untiring father of all created things, the imperishable cithara of the universe; it is I who have harmonized the whirlwinds of heaven.)

There are certain correspondences which it may be interesting at this point to note: the seven vowels, the seven senses, the seven planets, the seven tones; and, if you are interested in music used therapeutically, seven ganglia of the sympathetic nervous system.<sup>1</sup> The best exoteric description of the seven senses that I can present in this connection is a series of seven increasingly large circles, one drawn

<sup>1</sup> According to Hindoo books, the sacral, prostatic, epigastric, pineal, cardiac, pharyngeal, and postnasal.



around another. Let us label them in this order, beginning at the center, because Taste is the sense quite within the body: Taste, Touch, Smell, Sight, Hearing, — the five physical senses. But these, it is generally conceded, are all one in various aspects. The sixth, then, would be the functioning of that which manifests as these five, freed from the limitations of time and space. In other words, we have as our sixth sense the use of these five, free from material conditions, manifesting as clairaudience, clairvoyance, and all analogous knowledge on this plane. That is doubtless a state of conscious activity to which the normal man is entitled: and the fact that we have the phrase "the seven senses" would indicate the possibility of our arriving at their possession. The seventh sense, however, appears to be the achievement of a spiritual perception which, when attained on this plane of existence, lifts its possessor to the highest state of evolution consonant with incarnation on this planet;<sup>1</sup> and such a human being would be so far removed from common perceptions that he would seem to us scarcely a human being. The Buddhists of India and Japan lay claim to such sages as their incarnate leaders.

Of the seven senses, Taste, we would say, was the lowest because entirely enclosed within the physical body; Touch would come next, being to our knowledge not further removed from the body, even in the most holy instance, than the hem of the garment. Smell is the third. The fourth is Sight. Consider for a moment the fourth vowel as quoted by St. Irénée. That is the vowel I. We know the im-

<sup>1</sup> Refer to lecture on Rhythm.

portance, physical and mystical, attributed to sight. The ancient mystic named the vowel I as the correspondence to the fourth heaven, "which is the center." You will remember, perhaps, that of the old Greek modes it is the fourth note which is the tonic. It is hardly necessary to point out the number of languages in which the vowel referred to (the fourth) signifies the person. I find in a book by the Blessed John Ruysbroeck called "Love's Gradatory," this curious analogue: "After this flows the fourth stream of the humble life, which is the total abandonment of all self-will and all that touches self." Is this then one of the mystical paradoxes, and is the stone that we call the chief of the corner rejected by the Builder?

In my *Conférence on the Modes* I did not feel justified in including an astrological working-out of the semitones of the octave or that of various tonal arrangements used by the Greeks, the Europeans, and Scriabin and Debussy, because it was empirical and tentative. But I may say in this connection that the fixed signs of the Zodiac came in such places in this working-out as to suggest a superphysical potency in chords of fourths.

Ritual music began in our age with Wagner; ritual poetry with Yeats. The dance, if taken as the actual motion of the body itself, would by common consent be considered the most material of the arts; but transmute it by purpose and design into a ritual bridge and it not only involves all the other arts, but itself proves that nothing is common or to be despised. For that with which we began at the center, physical body, reaches out into the spirit,



and that which we placed remotely as the spirit is the eternal center.

Artists work as Mr. Pearsall Smith ("The English Language") has done, according to the instinctive process arising independently of reason, though afterward justified by it. It is comforting to those of us who believe in this method to read on page v of the preface to Granville's "Differential and Integral Calculus": "The object is not to teach the student to rely on his intuition, but, in some cases, to use this faculty in advance of analytical investigation." I am privileged to quote from a manuscript by Miss J. Landseer Mackenzie, "Knowing, feeling, striving," as the proper sequence to be observed. And an Oriental artist has said, "The answer comes first." Since, as we learned in the *Conférence on Rhythm*, "rhythm links up the intellect and feeling," a mistaken order of those three is out of rhythm, and disharmony of some sort results. If, as Scriabin says, the meditating prophet and the creative artist sit at the center receiving the finer vibrations that are entirely hidden from the masses, the creative artist, and I judge the recreator, or interpretative artist, to be of his class, must realize to the full his power and his responsibility. The fourth heaven is the realization of our person in its essence, renounced and discovered, "lost" and therefore "saved," — no longer separated from the All. That is Sight. A résumé of the order of sense perceptions might be made in this form:

1. Taste.
2. Touch.
3. Smell.

4. Sight.
5. Hearing.
6. Duplication of lower plane sense perceptions, without material considerations limiting their function; all five being united in the sixth, or the one Sense of Sense completely manifested (clairvoyance, clairaudience, knowledge of sealed letters in unknown languages, etc.).
7. Perception of "spiritual or secondary causes" (Edinburgh Lectures, Troward) in images not conceivable on the earth plane; the last sense to be evolved on the earth plane, — generally developed only after material dissolution. "Spiritual or secondary causes" are referred to in Magic sometimes as "Great Princes"; in relation to Egyptian music as "planetary gods," and are *probably* the objects of invocation with results obtained here by the law of correspondences.

These senses, you will see, are physically in inverse ratio to Spiritual Verity, inasmuch as the first is the one quite within the body: Taste, most bound to the perishable physical consciousness — the transitory need of bodily protection which was perhaps the original purpose of the sense of taste.

The senses, the tones, the planets, the vowels, ranged one against another, all seven of them, would make an interesting playground for the artist who wished to practice a modern Gematria and be really what the musician is called in India — the magician; and the audience, properly educated, to use a phrase of Dr. Coomaraswamy, "coöperates with the magician."

h	Taste	A	Tones
Ź	Touch	E	*
♂	Smell	H	*
⊙	Sight	I	*
♀	Hearing	O	*
♂	The Sense of Sense	T	*
ᐃ	The Seventh	Ω	*

The tones cannot to advantage be arranged illustratively in the above chart, inasmuch as their arrangement according to the mode employed brings forth its corresponding result. It is noteworthy that the sign for the Sun is crudely representative of the organ of the eye; also the vowel upsilon is the mark of distinction between the planets Venus and Mercury. In the New York Library the card catalogue of books on the Alphabet offers a range of inexhaustible material which is doubtless duplicated in some measure in smaller libraries.

Forrest Reed in his book on William Butler Yeats reminds us of the ritual words that Yeats loves to use from time to time, not to fill in space but for his own purposes: "wither," "blossoming," "crozier," "the shining seven" — beautiful old strange words, some of them so new to us that they seem peculiar to him. In poetry, as new thoughts creep in, new words will creep out: in music, as new consciousness is awakened, new chords are conceived. You will remember Miss Landseer Mackenzie has said "chords correspond to subdivisions of idea in language."

These are not common or vulgar words, but ancient and mystical words of awe and beauty and

wonder, symbols of those unknown things of which art is the perception. So in music, since a new consciousness has been awakened in men of the Western world—and the artist is the peak that first catches the sun's rays—the chords that “represent the subdivisions of idea in language” tend to employ fourths—early symbols of glory long forgotten.

In “Delinquent Gods,” I find that its author, Frank Fruttchey, believes that music is absolutely dependent upon the student's ability to arouse what are commonly termed the finer forces of human potentiality. Let us say the composer's ability—not the student's. If the thing which touches the “finer forces of human potentiality” is not inherent in the music, what can the student do but deceive himself and try to extend the deception? Plato considered the Lydian mode sufficiently powerful to render a nation effeminate, and in “Modern Painting,” Marriott writes: “The man who believes that the invisible world is the real world will not be apt to employ his medium to depict appearances.”

You will read in “Pavanes,” “For every ‘great age’ a few poets have written a few beautiful lines or found a few exquisite melodies, and ten thousand people have copied them, until each strand of music is planed down to a dullness.” The creative artist does not “seek” effects. Watchfulness can only be employed critically; it cannot be creative. Watchfulness is one function of the self-knowledge that is a gift of the poet, lest he “say badly in poetry what has been well said in prose.” But in the creative sequence of “knowing, feeling, striving,” this function does not enter. It pays a visit the day

after, spectacles on nose, to see the result. In art we are dealing with creation.

One of the parallels between ultramodern music and ultramodern poetry is the choice of exotic subjects; and although these were fashionable, even prevalent, in the France of a past generation, the exotic was used more as an idiom than as an expansion of consciousness. In those days we conquered strange peoples instead of learning from them. The exotic idea has not developed in this period in both directions as one might imagine, — toward intensity of concept on the one hand and an illustrative lightness on the other. The mimetic is less frequently employed in the twentieth century representation of strange lands than it was in the century preceding; but the characteristic underlying feeling of the Orient, which is a psychological value, is evident, as indeed it could not help being, in view of the psychological developments that have taken place in all European countries in the last half century.

There is a sharp line of demarcation between those artists who use exotic scenes to enliven dead motives and those whose exotic scenes are inseparable from the motives displayed. We are all familiar with such poor imitations of the Oriental as "Pale Hands" by Amy Woodford Finden; and while I do not wish to be ungracious to a prominent composer of my own country whose achievements are notable, it would not be honest to evade in this connection the avowal of a deep distaste for the coupling of well-known Bengali songs with erudite and sophisticated Western harmonization. The

English transgression in the treatment of exotic themes is more naïve. France has sinned greatly in her song literature of Oriental cast. Of French Eastern songs bearing verisimilitude to the Orient, the best are by an American, Walter Morse Rummel. Russia is half Eastern in spite of the Germanic influence that for centuries practically banned her native musical speech. We talk of Russian music and the layman thinks of the Volga Boat-song, while the connoisseur thinks perhaps of Stravinski, and the small professional, still standing like a marionette where his German music teacher left him, thinks of Rubinstein or Tschaikowski. For discrimination between a dead motive enlivened with a bit of Oriental colour, and an exotic scene in which motive and colour are inseparable, the simplest method is to note what the music or poetry in question has in common with all music or poetry. The residue is open to analysis as being distinctive. On this basis of judgment we have to deal with mode, with rhythm, with interval and with chord arrangements. Certain intervals and chords are familiar to us by association; as the word "steppes" in a poem would give the casual reader the sensation of something Russian, or the word "fjord" of something Norwegian, though he had never seen, even in imagination, a fjord or a steppe. There you have our property-room of the theater of music. It has relative value,<sup>1</sup> but no greater absolute value than has æsthetic judgment. What is Iceland and what is Persia, in terms of music? Had we been

<sup>1</sup> Conrad Aiken, "Skepticisms," pp. 24, 25.



so taught, the minor second would mean Snorri Sturluson instead of Omar Khayyám.

It would be a limitation of this theme to tally off one poet against one musician, yet certain similar qualities come out in similar types of people and their work. Those artists not limited to the plane in which their bodies are incarnate, reveal inevitably in their work the spreading of their wings. To Stravinski the interest in the superphysical can from his works with some security be imputed, notwithstanding the denial by his friends. He has at all events familiarity with ancient runes used in a Russian ritual which approaches pagan nature-worship, and these same runes are the very framework of at least one Sonata by Alexander Scriabin.

An Englishman of an earlier generation mentally is Granville Bantock. When he essays the exotic, instead of making Oriental pictures by laying on the paint so that it forms the shapes, he gives us English drawings filled in with Oriental colours. It is on a larger scale what the French song writers did a generation ago and what Rhéné-Baton and other small Frenchmen are doing now. A similar impression is produced by a volume of recent translations from Chinese poetry called a "Lute of Jade." Compared with the volume "Cathay," the fault is glaring. This fault, superficially considered, is a lack of technique; but essentially it is a lack of the artist's demand upon himself for that technique, which means of course an insufficient appreciation of his theme. So it comes down, at the end, to the sincerity of the artist in approaching his subject. Absorbing devotion to his subject and exquisite care

in all details of its presentation can hardly be exemplified in modern music better than in the works of the late Charles Griffes. In that connection I would like to offer this critique written by a fellow artist, which I have culled from the *Musical Leader* of August 30, 1917:

“From the musical standpoint the detail which stood forth in bold relief was the orchestration supplied by Charles T. Griffes for a pantomime done by Itow and Miss Lindahl.

“Mr. Griffes is a young American composer who has attracted considerable attention for his compositions of a larger form, particularly for ballet and pantomime. He caught the spirit of Japan to a remarkable degree, using here and there a few themes that are genuine folk-tunes taken down by himself, and the development is done in a manner entirely Japanese with no attempt at Occidental harmonization, using open octaves, fifths and major and minor seconds only. The orchestration is made for violin, viola, 'cello and bass, all muted and all sustaining organ points but carrying none of the themes. These are left to the flute, clarinet and oboe, supplemented by a Chinese gong, a Chinese tom-tom used in entirely Oriental manner, two tympani and a harp. Throughout, the music and the dance, as well as the staging, had the delicacy and distinction of a Japanese print. The subject concerns a legendary dance of Old Japan called ‘Sho-Jo, or The Spirit of Wine,—a Symbol of Happiness.’”

Let me call your attention to the musical material to which Mr. Griffes limited himself in the composi-

tion referred to. You will see the phrase "open octaves, fifths, and major and minor seconds only." The "third," to which we are so devoted in the music of our expiring period, was according to all accounts an unused interval in archaic music.<sup>1</sup> So persistently is it lacking that you will find in "Die Anfänge der Musik," by Stumpf, such passages as the following: "Darum würden der Dreiklang und der Dominant-septimen Akkord, die wir unwillkürlich zu dieser Melodie hinzudenken, unzulässige Zuthaten sein"; and "Sind Dreiklänge, Akkorde überhaupt, ein ganz spätes Produkt, eine gothische Barbarei, wie sie Rousseau nannte?"

If the impulse is less than sympathetic, an exotic subject had better not be approached. The only difference between faults and dear foibles lies in the sympathy or interest attaching to their possessors; for personal and national characteristics are ponderable only on the scales of affection. Really the faith of a child is valuable to a student of art. William James has been quoted to me as saying that he preferred not to read a criticism on a work of art, for while science was of the mind and liable to searching criticism, art was of the spirit and one should take it or leave it, but not analyze it.

The detail in academic study of music and of poetry must never descend to profanation or a willful deafness to a new message. It is not well to confuse analytical study of method with understanding of the word, for analysis is studying not the thing, but about the thing; the clothing, not the being.

<sup>1</sup> See Maurice Emmanuel.

Otherwise it is as if desiring to understand what my neighbor says to me in the French tongue, I should undertake Bertrand Clover's "Phonetics and Morphology of the French Language," or Gustave Koerting's "Formen-lehren der Französischen Sprache," instead of myself establishing direct contact with the thing, as a child does, and letting that contact widen and deepen through sympathy and use.

Now contact with the arts of music and poetry is through the ear. Unfortunately the appreciation of both these arts is retarded in America by lack of cadence in our speech and the consequently inhibited apperception of all but the crudest rhythms and dynamic shadings. If we are listening to music and desire receptivity to the message, should we by our training listen for a Neapolitan Sixth or should we put our minds in a state of "sensing" — as our wise forbears used to say — the relations and proportions that are music itself, though they be strange to us? In a new language the word is not at fault if we do not understand it. We may laugh at its funny sound the first time we hear it, but on acquaintance it has its own meaning for us. So with a musical idiom or a cadence in *vers libre*. The more highly evolved the human being, the less he finds the strange thing funny. By the time he is a cultured person he has met so many strange things and so broadened his intelligence to receive them, that it is almost his instinct to see himself as ridiculous because not yet all-embracing. Suppose we look at ourselves from the point of view of Schönberg, who knew more as a child about music than

most of us do now: we shall still have a right to our opinion—an undisputed right; nobody else wants it. Keeping our alarm clock of poetical judgment set for A.D. 1879 gives us a doubtful qualification to appraise the poetry of 1920. Is the fault necessarily with the poetry and music if they fail to find response in us? I have read that a keen ear for prosody and a nice perception of quantity may have been something of a rarity among the upper classes even in the Augustan Age. We are not greatly culpable for our lack of appreciation. Robert Bridges, the present Laureate, made, I suppose, the first serious efforts towards the establishment of the element of quantity in English poetry.

Mary Halleck writes: "We are rhythmic because the physical man demands it"; and again, "The iambus enters in and out, just so, as rhythms go, by the clock." What then of Quintuple time? It was in favour with the ancient Greeks and is found not only in the folk-songs of the Finns, Turks, Negroes and the Basques, but in Bavarian and Bohemian dances. Charles S. Myers writes that the Peonic or Hemiolic rhythm of the Greeks is founded on "the ratio 3:2." The Chinese say, it will be recalled, that the ratio of 3:2 represents the World-order, of which music is the image. Then the "physical man" is perhaps, after all, not the arbiter of rhythm. Among the savage race of the Saráwaks there are complicated rhythms surpassing our achievements. Just as the Greeks, according to some authorities, subdivided each beat of the five into five, so that the whole foot might contain the ratio 15:10, the Saráwaks use a drum called the

Táwak, whose measure has been mechanically registered as noted below :



This, it will be seen, is 15/16:10/16, or the precise ratio of the two parts attributed to a measure of the ancient Greeks, a rapid rhythm of three and two in this exotic instance, used with dotted values.

As complexities of Hindu music are consonant with their weaving of textiles, so exotic poetry has as fine rhythmic values as exotic music. According to Headlam, many of the complexities of Greek lyric meter may be traced to an overlapping of rhythms one by another. He attributes their æsthetic value to an effect resembling counterpoint in music. I adduce this bit of learning as an analogue to the technical skill employed by some of the younger and more advanced of our English and American poets. With such skill do they choose the words that their thoughts are to flow in, that ripple overlaps ripple, creating in the mind sound under sound, tones over tones. It is no longer a linear



art, their English verse — they have given it a second dimension.

To distinguish then between a truly exotic subject in modern poetry or music and the commercial mannerism which one might call the Cry of the Bazaar, we have but to see whether the arrangement of words, of thoughts, of images, of tones, is monotonous or slangy, or whether our power of discrimination can discern proportion, diversity or skill that is new to us. Noting the sound of modern poetry and music from this standpoint we shall find in the best of each certain similarities: (1) rhythms that give freedom from the physical, measured beat; (2) patterns and runes in place of tunes; (3) exotic subjects and exotic treatment: and consequent upon this new material, (4) the relegation of grandiloquence to the ash heap. It is burned out. It no longer gives us warmth.

The same alertness that makes us ready for the new if it is good, makes us fierce against the new if it is bad. For it is an imposition to try to "do" so amiable a person as the open-minded one. If the exotic is one of the salient features of ultramodern music and poetry, it is worth while to note the line of demarcation between those who use exotic scenes to brighten up an old set of ideas and those whose exotic scenes are inseparable from the ideas displayed. This feature of ultramodern music and poetry is so interwoven with another parallel between the two arts at the present day, which I might call expansion of limited rhythm or freedom from the dance beat, that the one will be discerned in the other. Again, growing out of this expansion of the rhythmical

feeling and toward the contemplative attitude of the Orient, we find another parallel in music and poetry which does not embody the consecutive or sequential. The real creators of art disregard what are called the conditions of life. It is in moments when inspiration fails that they reflect their time. Arthur Waugh in the *Outlook* (London, 1917) writes: "Over and over again, in studying the new school of poetry, one is impressed by the conviction that it achieves beauty as it were by a divine accident, and very seldom at the cost of that austere spiritual discipline which is the secret of all great art." Were it not for doing this critic an injustice, I would like to have closed that quotation after the words "divine accident"; for I believe that he perceived the essence of much of the beauty of our modern art before writing that phrase, and perhaps did not realize that such divine accidents come as a result of just that austere spiritual discipline whose evidence he at once admits and deplores. To attain the realm of ecstasy is justification enough for a work of art.

In the poetry and music of our present day, rhythms have become individual. Form, the greater mould for rhythm to flow through, has become individual; arrangements of letters as of tones are made for more profound reactions than are consequent upon alliteration or the mimetic. Just as Benedetto Croce wrote that every art work was an independent organism in itself, to be judged by its own laws, so Mark Pattison, a writer in England of twenty years ago, felt that any brilliant example of a successful departure from a given form was a

success. Of course if we abandon previous unconscious concepts—which one might term prejudices—Puritanism has to go. Toussaint in his poems shows us Eastern luxury of loving. The Dreamy Peer of County Meath tells us lies of three hemispheres such as in our childhood would have called for soap and water on our tongues—and we forgive him; and Anisfeld from Russia gives us pictures at our Metropolitan Opera House that make us rejoice in him. At last we have forgotten to fancy the Arabs heathen, the Irish Popish knaves, the Russians bearded barbarians. We have forgotten these local superstitions through art, the art of the twentieth century. The earth is girdled with art now, and it is not an old ceinture mended, but a new vision of truth and beauty. Moussorgski's dictum is that music must continue to reflect our human evolution or die. That does not mean physical evolution. Our physical side is close to less animate nature. Even our nervous reactions are found now to duplicate those of the trees. Human evolution is an unsheathing of the white light within.

The "less concern with dogma and more with truth" that Amy Lowell attributes to the modern poets is equally true of the modern musicians. Any measure, old or new, can be used. But scholarship is required on the part of the poet if his dream is to make its own form, "lest he say badly in poetry what has been well said in prose."

Rare rhythms come into England through France as a rule, because the French language lacks the dynamic accent of Germanic tongues. These young poets in England are linguists. They know Latin

and Greek to start with, and at least a couple of modern languages beside their own. It is interesting to think that Richard Aldington and his wife "H. D.," read Greek together for their amusement; and every language is a new window through which one views the world. When you read these poets who are working in England and those others in America who are employing the same fine values of stress and length and tone, remember that they with their exquisitely developed sense would never think of the harsh stress we commonly use in America. This is equally applicable to the finer, subtler kind of music that we recognize as ultramodern. It is one of the peculiarities of modern music and modern poetry that they have to be heard and not seen. You know how the readers in a publishing house used to glance over a new score. If it conformed to what the reader knew, it was a good score; if it was something he was not yet familiar with, it was "wrong." The editor, ignorant of the creative spirit, presumed to be a censor. You have heard people say, "It is n't poetry"; or, "It is n't music." That means only that it is not their habit of music or poetry, and Cyril Scott in "The Philosophy of Modernism" says, "In art perhaps the most dangerous enemy is habit"; and again: "Unfortunate is the creator who is immediately understood, for to be thus understood often means not to be worth understanding."

I doubt if any age has great value in itself. The style of Couperin has been successfully imitated by many writers, but the genius of Couperin remains unique. Surely there were many of similar style in

his time, but only the best survive. That will be true of the present-day schools as well. Who could imitate Blake? Or César Franck? And are not the publishing houses flooded with attempts to make the whole-tone scale purr in gurgling cadences such as Debussy's genius produced? To quote Ezra Pound again: "For every 'great age' a few poets have written a few beautiful lines or found a few exquisite melodies, and ten thousand people have copied them until each strand of music is planed down to a dullness." When you hear the phrase, "It is n't music,—or poetry," just remember that the Sonnets of Shakespeare and Elizabeth Barrett Browning are not properly sonnets at all. Corson says they are the most beautiful love poems in the language, but they are not sonnets. And as for Shakespeare, there is n't any such thing as the sonnet rhyme scheme he uses: ab ab cd cd ef ef gg! But why should there be? Who makes "forms" but writers themselves? Certainly not schoolmasters and publishing house readers!

Max Eastman hopes for a new mode of approach, and says, in his book "The Enjoyment of Poetry": "It will reveal and explain, not the scholastic conventions about literary structure, nor the verbiage of commentators, but the substantial values that are common to the material of all literature."

Now, as Shakespeare and other Elizabethans, by virtue of their birth and environment, were endowed with other varieties of inspiration, of a genus similar to that of Italian sonneteers, it was natural that they should modify the form their muse adopted. The foster parent was English thought, affecting

perforce the development of the alien child adopted. So far the creative artist is the revelator of his day.

One modern characteristic in both music and poetry is Rhythm as distinct from Time. In 1687 Rousseau said: "Avoid a profusion of divisions which only disturb the tune and obscure its beauty. Mark not the beat too much." Couperin in 1717 said: "I find that we confuse time and measure with what is called cadence or movement. Measure defines the quantity, the equality; and cadence the soul that must be added." Now the Imagistes lay great stress on cadence. Fletcher is another of the Imagistes, not delicate like H. D., but colorful and strong. It is not my intention in this Conférence to yoke one poet with one musician, but you might compare Fletcher if you will with Moussorgski. Fletcher's poem "Lincoln" has the quality of the stronger work of Moussorgski. It is not pathetic and partisan, like the musician Tschaikowski and the writer Tolstoy, both wasteful of words and personal. John Butler Yeats would have said of those older ones that they could not get away from their self-importance. But Moussorgski throws himself into Boris as Fletcher does in "Lincoln."

There is often in great creative minds a lack of compliance with the demand of the sequential mind that has not complete vision. If it is not too great a digression, I would like to suggest that something akin to this mental state of realization, or the elimination of the sequential, may be the reason for the revolutionary tendency of poets and musicians throughout history. The habit of conceiving and straightway presenting the perfected image robs



them of patience with the slow processes of development toward perfection. Realization, as Max Eastman so truly sets forth in "The Enjoyment of Poetry," is the poet's attitude of mind, whereas anticipation is the narrative attitude. The one, being nonsequential, is not adapted to handling mundane things. Great creative artists see things in terms of realization instead of the slow terms of sequence. Freed from the tyranny of the symphonic structure and the epic ideal, we have in music the ellipsis of harmonic progression, and in poetry the quick perception of the image without the cumbersome leading of words depicting the course of events. Not that directness is the point, but the whole scene at once: an evolution of consciousness. If the vision presented be new to us, so much the better. A Japanese or Chinese clear-cut, timeless presentation of an image of beauty, when regarded in the light of the habit of clumsy verbiage of the nineteenth century, appears the work of a minor poet—that most disastrous thing to be. Scriabin's Prelude No. 2 in Opus 74, his last work, is only one page long; but to know it is an experience. In poetry of this microcosmic brand, description of salient features is not of necessity discarded, however, because the artist in a momentarily timeless state of ecstasy may witness, while not participating in, the sequential. A program representationally conceived is an intellectual shape, a product of the reasoning mind, as indeed it must be while portraying the fleeting aspects of things, and is outside the realm of ecstasy.

For apprehension by the general public, Scriabin

affords to the habitual hearing but one "buttoning-on point," as the Germans would say. That is the four-bar phrase. Erik Satie, abandoning even this concession to musical custom, as well as tonality and classified rhythm, grants us a point of contact in his ecclesiastical chord sequences. Like children resting on a small familiar idea, we accept new concepts as we grow used to them. Certain poets give us the externals of a well-known figure, as Frost presents the farmer or Sandborg the Chicagoan or H. D. a tree, leading us to a newness of understanding of things that intrinsically have no novelty for us; thus fulfilling the duty of the poet as expressed by Sar Peladan: "*L'art se doit au même office que la religion: magnifier l'élément divin dans les choses, et y faire participer autrui.*" It is much the same happy broadening of concept when Scriabin leads us through a new conception of the possibilities of enharmonic relationship in a tone, to hear new overtones. Another American poet gives us in place of familiar pictures, a new grouping of things, like his "songs idling at the street corners," or

"Golden rose the house, in the portal I saw thee, a  
marvel  
Carven in subtle stuff, a portent.  
Life died down in the lamp, and flickered,  
Caught at the wonder."

This poet, Ezra Pound, might be compared with Stravinski, in quality if not in power or endurance. Whether Pound and Rémy de Gourmont shared the same influence that made them both uncouple words

that had long gone hand-in-hand, or whether the older man transmitted the idea to the younger, it is hard to say. As with Yeats, the inner vision of Pound acts independently of what is usually recognized or usually restricted. If sometimes, like a youth who resents having goodness attributed to him, Pound shows what Max Eastman would call "an excessive love of the imaginative realization of what is normally repulsive," this is never picture-making for its own materialistic sake. It merely shows his vision so far-reaching that he is inclusive rather than exclusive. These young American poets are not personal, nor are the young English poets who are their confrères in the modern movement. Minor artists project their limited persons of vanity upon the world. Every artist in his time is likely to be called a minor artist, but perhaps the best test of his importance is this quality of impersonality. As Jane Harrison says in "Ancient Art and Ritual": "When an artist claims that expression is the aim of art, he is too apt to mean self-expression only, utterance of individual emotion. Utterance of individual emotion is very closely neighboured by, is almost identical with, self-enhancement. What should be a generous, and in part altruistic, exaltation becomes mere megalomania. This egotism is, of course, a danger inherent in all art. The suspension of motor reactions to the practical world isolates the artist, cuts him off from his fellow men, makes him in a sense an egotist. . . . But this suspension is, not that he should turn inward to feed on his own vitals, but rather to free him for contemplation. All great art releases from self." As

Goethe said, "For Beauty they have sought in every age. He who perceives it is from himself set free."

Here the Orientals are in advance of us in poetry. Even a thousand years ago, Chinese poets instead of hitting their readers between the eyes, used a ricochet of suggestion; and the modern Japanese instead of saying, "I see," or "I behold a bamboo-tree and a pool," will say:

"A slender bamboo,  
And a pool."

The idea is that if the reader's absorption into the vision is deflected by the poet's personality, the poet has not fulfilled his purpose, which was to make the reader take the vision as his own. Picture-making, then, is not "for its own materialistic sake," as Eastman says, but because of the correspondence in the poet's mind between the planes—material, mental, spiritual (like ice, water, steam—a unit transmutable). From this altitude, objectivity unencumbered by personal reaction becomes the highest subjectivity. The elimination of the sequential, the weeding out of intermediate steps in a work of art, either of modern poetry or music, is the result of this mental state: the state of realization,—all things and times a unit, as opposed to the sequential or consecutive. It is another plane of consciousness.

The great talent of Amy Lowell is not on this plane. In her poetry she employs skill and imagination rather than that vision beyond the rational which may be what we call genius. Miss Lowell's sense of local attachment finds its parallel on the creative plane. Yet where shall we find an American

musician of so worthy an order of gifts or of achievement?

In rhythm Tschaikowski is a precursor to Stravinski, by reason of the synchronous opposition of the metrical forms: the pattern and the phrase at variance, or sometimes the pattern and the meter. This rhythmic element of synchronous diversity which might seem to us to have arisen in Russia, is more probably an Eastern-European relic of what Stumpf calls "Heterophonie," the simultaneous rendering of a melody and its variations, a feature of certain Oriental music even at the present time.<sup>1</sup>

Tschaikowski felt the customary major and minor modes as the natural material of tonal arrangement. In this regard he was European, not Asiatic; while with respect to tonality the later Russians, Moussorgski, Stravinski, Scriabin, possess an inner hearing as uncontaminated by custom of outer hearing as is the inner vision of Yeats by the sights of the world. The salient features of modern music as opposed to that of previous centuries appear to me to be aristocracy of rhythmic concept or freedom from the peasant dance-beat; new rhythmic patterns, largely drawn from the obsolete and the exotic; new fundamental tone-arrangements (modes); new enharmonic tone-arrangements (relations); new elisions; the repetition of an integral pattern as a motive; the free use or the elimination of "development," and a surcease from legalized, even obligatory redundancy.

"One of the characteristics of Russian novelists

<sup>1</sup> "A Study of Rhythm in Primitive Music," Chas. Myers. *British Journal of Psychology*, 1904-05.



is their power of supplying the atmosphere necessary to understand their work," I read in the *London Outlook* of May 28, 1917. Their medium of words seems to the musician all disadvantage. Poets, however free their thought, play always with a captive ball. The word, however new in its sense to the poet, has a well-worn connotation in the reader's mind. Yet if the creative artist wants a definite concept, the word is the best medium short of representational painting. Greatly as I admire Mr. Frederick Manning, his poem "Demeter Mourning" is an indispensable example of the "captive ball." Prohibition must be more popularly ratified before a poet can speak with impunity of the "cold grey dawn":<sup>1</sup>

I have seen her in sorrow, as one blind  
With grief, across the furrows on soiled feet  
Pass, as the *cold grey dawn* came with cold wind,  
Grey as fine steel and keen with bitter sleet,  
Beneath the white moon waning in the skies:  
And I grew holy gazing in her eyes.

Never mind if immediate results are not forthcoming. Blake and Shelley and the Pre-Raphaelites and Impressionists and Burne-Jones and Whistler were for the greater part of their lives unrecognized or mocked. Let us not forget that John Milton's brother requested him politely to change his name. The qualitative standard is the only gauge for the artist. Ralph Adams Cram speaks wisely of the

<sup>1</sup> In Paris in the 90's an excellent French Opera was put on the shelf because its chief theme chanced to be identical with the new popular tune Tar-ra-ra-boom-de-ay. From such instances I would intensify the plea for positive fundamental tone arrangement and rare rhythms as the material worthy of a gifted composer who essays the expression of great thoughts.



fallacy of the quantitative standard, in his illuminating book, "The Great Thousand Years."

We have had quantity until in our revulsion from diffuseness we are impatient of everything more redundant than the sign. Is the fact not indicative that we are ready to return to the symbol? As Jane Harrison says in "Ancient Art and Ritual" (p. 207), "Art in these latter days, goes back as it were, on her own steps, recrossing the ritual bridge back to life." For Art, "coming out of a perception of unknown things," is ready in this new age to complete a cycle and return to its source, whence, in the great Rhythm, it must again emerge.

The Parallels I find in modern music and modern poetry are nine:

1. Exotic themes with exotic treatment.
2. Negation of the Sequential.
3. Elimination of Intermediate Steps.
4. New basic arrangements of material.
5. Patterns and Runes in place of tunes.
6. Freedom from the Peasant dance-beat.
7. Grandiloquence to the ash heap.
8. The aural appeal instead of the visual.
9. The effect upon the critic.

Nine, like the Muses! Dining one evening with a Prelate of the Eastern Catholic Church, I turned and asked my host, "If there were a tenth Muse, what would it be?" Like a flash he answered, "Appreciation!" Let us say, then, that our tenth Parallel is Freedom guided by the Tenth Muse. That means in its essence, New Values, and Alertness. So we come back to the requisites of all art-creation, Sensitiveness, Self-knowledge and Sympathy.

## SCRIABIN

HOW long it takes the light of fame to travel down the side of Mount Humanity from the peaks that first catch the rays of greatness to the broad base at the earth level! Even in his home town, Moscow, that he loved, Alexander Scriabin was not whole-heartedly recognized until after his death.

Parents, teachers, friends — these sum up a man's life. The first two are the occasion of his inclinations and opportunities. The last of the three factors in a man's life — his friends — are the results of inclination and opportunity, and their further cause. When you know about the parents, the teachers and the friends of Scriabin, you will understand how the Light shining through him was broken up into the colours that we call his music.

It is almost an impertinence to write on the subject of Alexander Scriabin when Dr. A. Eaglefield Hull has given us so perfect a result of what clearly was a labour of love, in his book "A Great Russian Tone-poet — Scriabin."

Alexander Nikolaivitch Scriabin was born on Christmas Day, 1871, in Moscow, in the house of the old Colonel his grandfather. The young mother, a pupil of Leschetitzki, and Gold Medalist at the Petrograd Conservatory, was such a child that, as Dr. Hull says, "the young couple did not number

forty years between them." When her baby was two years old the little mother died; but the child was brought up in his own family.


In Scriabin we have a rare example of the recording memory, and the still more rare instance of the ripening of such a mind into great artistic originality. When the boy was five he could play without a mistake the smaller classics of a couple of pages, after hearing them once. At the age of eight he composed; he wrote poems; he had a mechanical sense that led him through carpentering to the manufacture of miniature pianos. Now if you regard these gifts separately and synthetically you will see that they point to an intuitive sense of form. This sense of form remained with him so perfectly that in his later compositions, except for the runes he employed, it might be called his only material, almost summoning the tones to their inevitable places. The sense of accuracy, a relic of the early scientific training, is so impeccable that in his most complex compositions a note cannot be fumbled and the right one imagined, as may happen in compositions of the old school. If one note is out, the whole sequence is gone. Thanks to his inner development, the strong mnemonic gift of Scriabin never acted to his disadvantage. Had he developed a manner, like Debussy, the old material would have been repeatedly used. But unlike the French composer whose fame is coeval with that of Scriabin and whose popularity is more general, the Russian went back to the mainsprings of art for his inspiration. For this reason we have the continuous growth of Scriabin in his music, and the waning of

Debussy's power. Under the old régime in Russia the sons of officers were gratuitously educated at a military school; so Alexander Scriabin from the age of nine to his sixteenth year was learning what an officer and a gentleman was supposed to know, and was studying music as well. Of the two teachers, Conus and Zvierieff, we have no knowledge in this country; Tanieieff we know through compositions that have been played in New York, and from the fact that he was the teacher of the brilliant young recipient of the Berkshire Quartette Prize in 1918, Tadeusz de Jarecki. A very distinguished teacher of Scriabin was Safonoff, who understood him, protected him, and encouraged him. Just as every artist in the course of his career wears out the patience of more than one patron, so as a student he passes through the vicissitudes of association with teachers of various degrees of greatness and understanding. Arenski was one teacher of Alexander Scriabin—the one teacher who never saw, during their association or afterwards, any reason for his becoming a musician. During the single term that he studied with Arenski he had met a real patron, the kind that makes a country known for its art. That patron was Belaieff the music publisher, whose house was devoted exclusively to Russian composers. Belaieff published all of Scriabin's Symphonies, at the outset putting the young composer at financial ease, which enabled him to do his best work, and this friendship was severed only by the death of Belaieff in 1904 after thirteen years of association.

In Dr. Hull's book you will find such scholarly and detailed accounts of the five symphonies, the ten

sonatas, and a great number of the four hundred compositions left by Scriabin, that I will only speak in this Conférence from the personal point of view of certain compositions that interest me particularly; and perhaps going on from those you will find others that will be of more individual interest to you. There are of course the pieces for the left hand which you have doubtless already heard. Those were written while the lad had a broken right collarbone. Then the Boston Music Company has published certain numbers of Opus 8 that have an unusual rhythmic interest. The one in B minor, for example, which is number 3, is written in a time of  $6/8$  and a rhythm of  $3/4$ . By the rhythm I mean the little rhythmic pattern or mould, that little pattern

of two notes  which is given its char-

acteristic curve by the corresponding use of the forearm. I mean to say, the curve  represented by that little group of two notes is made audible when the wrist in its motion portrays that curve. To speak didactically, the action of the wrist would be Down, up, Down, up, Down, up, making three little curves in the six eighth-notes, which is the rhythmic pattern. If you desire the metrical accent as well, it is easy enough in the end to put a little spark of a high light wherever you want it. This étude is a lovely example of cross-rhythm, and in the middle movement that use of the left wrist making the rhythmic pattern in the bass will keep the whole design clear.

The other étude, Opus 8, is in B flat minor, for

when he wrote these, Scriabin was a young boy in his teens and had not yet advanced beyond the customary scale-material of music. This *étude* in B flat, No. 7, in Opus 8, has straight 4/4 time in the treble—four chords to the bar. But the bass is 12/8; and its pattern is such that it is the third of each group of three that comes with each metrical beat. This again, as in the *étude* previously mentioned, necessitates a gesture to facilitate the automatic rendition of the rhythmic pattern. As a matter of fact, this principle is indispensable if one would give the peculiar quality of divers tones and complex rhythms which we know as modern music.

Scriabin wrote ten pianoforte sonatas. The fifth is famous because it is said to mark an era in his work; for, like Corot, he had sharply defined periods. I do not mean roughly defined, because there was gradual and uninterrupted development; but that development made itself manifest at definite stages. The fourth sonata is Opus 30. It is written in F sharp major; and together with the *Divine Poem* or *Third Symphony*, the *Tragedy*, the *Poème Satanique* and some forty other pieces, it was written in the year 1904. These were songs of freedom after giving up a professorship at the Moscow Conservatory, where Scriabin had reluctantly taught during six arid years.

There are two kinds of pedagogues. There is the kind that has educated itself to teach and is going to teach to the end of the chapter just what it originally educated itself to know. That kind of pedagogue protects itself from the invasion of all new ideas and is as great an enemy to the progress



of art as is the sordidly commercial middleman. The other kind of pedagogue walks not with his own little lamp ahead of the pupil, but with the burning glass of love for Art he focuses its blinding rays anew each day the sun shines. Thus the leader-spirit Scriabin had both friends and enemies. In connection with this matter of Scriabin's enemies one may recall the fact of mediocrity's instant appeal. In Scriabin's most original work, that is to say, after self-knowledge and illumination had supplanted his strong mnemonic gift, there is nothing in his composition to flatter our vanity. Even if we accept the music for the worth that our sense of form and our artistic discrimination discern, we are baffled at times; and we may feel ourselves belittled by our lack of understanding. The form is so perfect, the meaning is so fine, and it is all done with such conviction and disregard of approval, that we are reminded of what the critic Alfred Stevens wrote in the nineteenth century: "Painting is not done for exhibitions. Refined work is smothered and shouters come off better." Scriabin never painted a "shouter."

In this *Conférence* I am confining myself to the piano music almost exclusively because it is only ten years since the completion of the last Symphony, and it will probably be another quarter of a century or so before our publishing houses and our orchestras get round to producing the Symphonies. The handful of people in a community who cherish for art an interest that is not purely local, will not require me for a guidepost. They will go direct to Dr. Hull for the deeper information he can give

with regard to the orchestral works. The piano literature itself, numbering about two hundred pieces, is sufficient to engage the interest of the musician for a little while. There is a Prelude in Opus 51 in which Scriabin has utilized but not used an old church mode, the Dorian. You will remember the lovely quality the minor second gives, and the harmonies that grow out of that scale, but in case the application of this almost theoretical memory is not easy for you yet in the new-old music, let me recall the scale to you in its divergence from our usual mode. This is the Dorian: E F G A | B C D E.

Scriabin's familiarity with the Greek modes was a matter of course, and he used them in early compositions. So here he made a beautiful scale, a version of our well-known minor scale, by combining the Dorian lower tetrachord with the Chromatique-Orientale tetrachord superposed.



The upper half is identical with our harmonic minor. This is equally valid from the standpoint of logic and of beauty with our well-known arrangement



which, as you will see, is the Phrygian lower tetrachord with the upper tetrachord Chromatique-Orientale. This Prelude is designated *Lugubre* and is Opus 51.

A musical creator may have various things to offer us. He may give us new thematic material or new harmonic material or new rhythmic material. Scriabin has given us all three. Is it the man or the artist who has done that? The quality of the man and the quality of his work are so related that a presentation of either would proclaim the other. Inspiration is inevitably coloured by what it passes through, like light through glass.

Now at the time Scriabin died, in April, 1915, he was at work on what he called a *Mystery*. It was a high ritual. Scriabin was a deeply religious person who recognized that the need of humanity is for illumination—more light coming through—or a higher plane of consciousness. That idea is always a little objectionable to our vanity. We prefer to say that animals cannot reason, rather than admit that we must take the trouble to do something more. A celebrated doctor in Europe told me that at a medical conference in Berlin the much advertised ant was being exploited as a marvel of intelligence. Referring to my friend for acquiescence in the high esteem in which the medical company held the insect, this doctor startled the company by saying that the attainments of the ant only proved to him how far humanity had yet to go. As you know, this further journey into realms of higher consciousness has been undertaken by various groups of people throughout the world, calling themselves by different names. The Rosicrucians are one of these groups; the Theosophists form another; the Christian Scientists have taken an inspirational short-cut; and the group under the leadership of Rudolph

Steiner have undertaken their development along the trail of Mystical Christianity. The Zen sect of the Buddhists are most profound. They have amazing technique, and certainly some of their devotees are saints. But to know their mental activities is to realize the world's need of Christianity as a religion of Love.

Scriabin was a Theosophist; and the composition on which he was at work at the time of his sudden death, called the *Mystery*, was to be a union of music, speech, gesture, scent and colour. The "passive initiates" as he termed the audience, were to participate, and the purpose of the composition was to engender in the hearers that state of mind in which they might have a vision of the higher planes of consciousness we hope to call our own. Something of this sort is undoubtedly at the back of our common phrase that music exalts us, or that it is an uplifting influence, or that we are the better for having heard it. Scriabin's idea in calling the audience "passive initiates" is akin to the thought in the mind of Coomaraswami, when in speaking of music in India he says, "The audience coöperates with the magician." It is not often, is it, in the music of the past three centuries, and its public performance, that we could employ the word "magician" where we use "musician"! Even the *cadenza*, originally born of ecstasy, is nowadays published and bought. The Oriental idea referred to by Coomaraswami and brought into our music by Scriabin is doubtless the basic principle of ancient ritual music, whether church ritual or nature ritual, whether Christian Transcendentalism or Natural

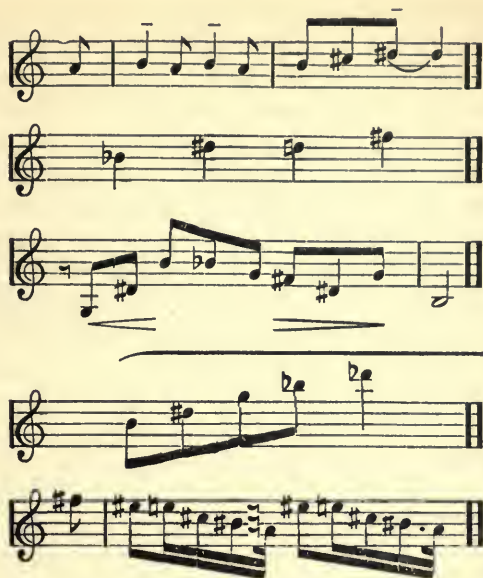
Magic. In both instances, objects in the world are employed not for what they appear to be, but in their essence, of which the outer manifestation is but a symbol. It is obvious that if there is power in music, the musician should be trained as an initiate, for if material power can be basely used, how much more important is it to be worthy of power from invisible springs! Is it not worth while to think of things on which Plato and Confucius agree?

Challenged for my estimate of Debussy, I would like to submit this parallel. Debussy was born in 1862. For thirty-eight years he lived in a decadent France of the end of the last century. He died in 1918. Born ten years after Debussy, Scriabin at the end of the century had lived twenty-eight years in Russia, a land then full of surging idealism. Where France was infidel, turning out her holy men and women, Russia was seeking the transcendental by means of every man who had a vision. "Cults" sprang up, a new cult for each individual revelation, each one a tongue of the great upward-flaming consciousness. Why, so general was the grouping of those who were seeking something higher, that when I did an ordinarily gracious deed for a fellow artist, a Russian literary woman, she asked me if I were a "sectarian," one who had founded a cult. In every land the citizen inhales his atmosphere as the plant is nourished by the air about it. So Debussy adopted a manner, and Scriabin grew into spiritual freedom. Debussy's last works were, accordingly, a feeble expression of his early thoughts, while Scriabin's were a fuller flowering.



In Russia there has been since ancient times a sect called Khlisti, and they have invocational chants, series of notes that represent the elements. If I may intrude a personal reminiscence, let me tell you of going into a London concert hall one afternoon during the progress of a song recital. Mme. Jarebzoza of Petrograd was singing something strangely familiar. I said, "Surely that is the earth-motiv!" Looking at the program, I found that it was entitled, "Ritual Song of the Sect Khlisti, harmonized by Stravinski"; and it was an invocation for rain. I am not sufficiently familiar with the works of Stravinski, since we have such small opportunity of hearing important new music, to determine from his use of such material whether the basis he is working from is mystical or only mental, — I mean, whether he is inspired or only clever. I have been assured that his sole interest outside of his music is in his wife and children, but this reputation might be the very result of his pursuit of things so fundamental and so profound that their names are kept inviolate. Now whether Scriabin drew the motifs that he used in his Eighth Sonata from the Russian sect Khlisti, or from other shrines in which they had been conserved, I have no means of knowing; but there are just five short motifs used as the basis of his Eighth Sonata, and some of them are familiar as nature motifs taught me by an initiate in London. The Eighth Sonata when properly rendered gives one a curious feeling of being out of doors; and if I am correct, these five short motifs are the runes, according to tradition given to Scriabin from one source or another, of the five elements.





All through the Sonata these musical phrases are the sole material used, and on the last page they are made prominent to even the casual observer:



The image displays a musical score for piano, organized into three systems. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The first system begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It features a series of chords in the right hand and a descending scale in the left hand. The second system continues the piece, showing more complex chordal textures and melodic lines. The third system includes a dynamic marking of *m.d.* (moderato) in the right hand, indicating a change in tempo. The score is written in a clear, legible style with standard musical notation, including notes, rests, and accidentals.

Incidentally, Scriabin wrote ten Sonatas: and although the number may have been a chance, it may also have been, since he was a Theosophist, that the ten Sonatas conform in some way to the ten Sephiroth of the Qabalah. In that event each Sonata would have a separate rôle to play on the stage of creation. Scriabin realized the brutality of the world of sense and the great range of beauty to be perceived by the awakened soul. Reticent and aristocratic, and loving his native town, he was prevented by the jeering attitude of its professional musicians from living and working there. A Japanese artist leaving this country for his home, after four years of employment by a New York merchant of art, was asked on the day of his departure, by his employer, how his work should be carried on. The Japanese replied: "Everything that I have learned in this shop is noted and is in the hands of your secretary: five pages. I have written down for them what mediums are to be used for everything. *Also I mentioned how to treat the artists, as artists treat the mediums.*"

Scriabin had married—with success that left much to be desired. He had made professional tours through Europe and Russia and even to America in 1906 and 1907, but his value was never generally perceived. In January, 1908, he wrote the glowing *Poème d'Extase*: and in Brussels the great score of *Prometheus*, which was the Fifth Symphony, and several smaller things were written in his latest manner that had a mystic basis of vibrational design. Among these latest compositions was the *Étude* Opus 65,—sharp, scintillant like bright bits of

broken glass. To the pianist let me say that this species of piano composition has to be rendered with the light, flat, fleet, coördinated movement of hand and arm that has been popularized during the past two seasons by the pianist Robert Schmitz.

Scriabin's composition was done largely in Brussels and in Switzerland. The Brussels period was of especial interest. From 1908 he had two years of close association with certain other fine minds engaged in delving beneath the surface, such men as Verhaeren, Delville, Mahrhofer; indeed, if I may quote from a letter from Dr. Hull, "There was a remarkable school for the New Art at Brussels during the time of Scriabin's residence there." With this in mind, let us in New York not deceive ourselves into thinking that a city is a musical metropolis because artists have honoured its market with their wares.

During Scriabin's residence in Brussels he married the loyal woman who survives him. I am told by Mr. La Liberté of Montreal, an erstwhile pupil of Scriabin's, that his widow is publishing a collection of all manner of things appertaining to her distinguished husband. The appearance of this book will be of particular interest in throwing more light on this original composer than his friends have been able to supply.

It has been said among artists, and it is true, that beauty should never be explained. They mean that it should be apprehended with another sense than the analytical. I think it is G. R. S. Mead in his volume of Essays called "Quests Old and New" who reminds us of the essential difference between analysis

and sympathy. "In sympathy," he says—I quote from memory—"or feeling with the other, we project ourselves into its being, knowing it as it is; whereas in analysis we try to compress the strange thing into a preconceived sense-experience, into which by its very nature it cannot fit." So, with persistent use of the analytical faculty we are continually the losers. Great new beauty has been born into the world in the past twenty years, since the year 1900, and I will not attempt to explain it. Your receptive attitude will give you more than any words of analysis could do. There is a complete literature for the pianoforte left by Scriabin. In less than nine months of the year 1903, you remember, he wrote the published works from Opus 30 to Opus 43, comprising the Fourth Pianoforte Sonata, the Tragedy, the *Poème Satanique*, the Divine Symphony and some forty small pieces.

The very first works written when a child are published by Jorgenson of Moscow. The first three Opus numbers are an *Étude*, a *Prelude*, an *Impromptu* and Ten *Mazurkas*; and rarely was there a published Opus of a solitary composition. Unfortunately Scriabin was not always under the tutelage of the greater pedagogues. Safonoff was a good man, and Taneieff, in spite of the traditional limitations of his own original work, was generous in refraining from extending those limitations over the consciousness of his students. But Arenski, that unfortunate house divided against itself, that man of genius who wrote the beautiful pianoforte concerto Opus 2 at the age of nineteen, and whose Opus 28 was a series of musical experiments in half

a dozen forgotten rhythms of Greek, Roman and Persian poetry — Arenski from the standpoint of progressively revelatory art was so limited a reactionary and so devoted to harmonic convention, that he found no talent in his genius pupil, Scriabin, who viewed a farther horizon. While Belaieff and Safonoff and Kussewitzsky encouraged and fostered his work, Arenski was of that caliber of professional whose envious opposition continued up to April 14, 1915, when the death of Scriabin united enemies and friends in proud lamentation and a large and enjoyable funeral.

The vital difference between Scriabin and the usual composer lies in the content of his art work. He does not present the human-emotional element, nor does he exhibit vain patterns like Schoenberg. His first Symphony was a Hymn to Art, the fluttering of his wings toward God. The Third Symphony was the Divine Poem; and the Fifth Symphony, Prometheus, was the spreading of those great wings on which he hoped to bear humanity upward and out over the borders of this fettered earth life. Hull writes: "With him we are indeed brought near to the Infinite and we do indeed 'gaze across the cloudy elements into the Eternal Sea of Light.'" I did not know these phrases when I heard his *Poème d'Extase* played by Mr. Altschuler and the Russian Symphony Orchestra in New York. There may be various ways of accounting for the phenomenon, but the fact is there, that both my companion and I, listening with closed eyes, saw during the ecstatic climax of that orchestral composition, the Poem of Ecstasy, a sea of molten gold on which



there floated a ship of violet light, immaterial, supernatural. I cannot tell you the beauty of it or the translucent colour and brilliancy. Does it not bring to mind the words of Claude Bragdon, "This is the essence of art, first to perceive and then to publish, news from that nowhere of the world from which all things flow and to which all things return"?

Scriabin always has wings; sometimes soaring, sometimes brooding, but always wings. I have no wish in detailing the achievements of Scriabin or showing what I consider to be his processes, to indicate a musical program or attribute conscious meanings to his music. That would be both futile and impertinent. I have endeavoured only to point out the divergence between the content of this master's work and the representational composers on the one hand, the emotional writers on the other. Some one has said, "As soon as the biographers of a creative artist learn that he had the idea of a union between art and religion, they look for external manifestations of that union." They either look for a sign, or find that union itself a stumblingblock. They still seem to think that the creative artist consciously makes works of art according to his beliefs, whereas the ideal of that union *in itself* opens the mind of the artist to the inflowing which manifests as a masterpiece. The creative artist at his best is but an instrument. He sits still and records what comes to him.<sup>1</sup> That he must be a perfect instrument goes without saying, and that he must take his

<sup>1</sup> See Cobb, "Mysticism and the Creed," page 139, line 25.

position at the center, where all is still, is evidenced by Scriabin's letter to Briantchaninoff,<sup>1</sup> published in the Moscow Musical Journal, *Mouzika*: "I cannot refrain from expressing my sympathy with the views which you have expounded in the *Novoye Vremo* on the subject of the educational significance of war.

"You have voiced an old idea of mine, that at certain times the masses urgently need to be shaken up, in order to purify the human organization and fit it for the reception of more delicate vibrations than those to which it has hitherto responded.

"The history of races is the expression at the periphery of the development of a central idea, which comes to the meditating prophet and is felt by the creative artist, but is completely hidden from the masses.

"The development of this idea is dependent upon the rhythm of the individual attainments, and the periodic accumulation of creative energy, acting at the periphery, produces the upheavals whereby the evolutionary movement of races is accomplished. These upheavals (cataclysms, catastrophes, wars, revolutions, etc.), in shaking the souls of men, open them to the reception of the idea hidden behind the outward happenings.

"The circle is complete, and a stage of the journey is finished: something has been attained, the creative idea has made one more impression on matter. We are now living through just such a period of upheaval, and in my eyes it is an indication that once

<sup>1</sup> I take the liberty of reproducing this letter entire from Dr. Hull's book on Scriabin.

again an idea has matured and is eager to be incarnated.

“And at such a time one wants to cry aloud to all who are capable of new conceptions, scientists, and artists, who have hitherto held aloof from the common life, but who in fact are unconsciously creating history. The time has come to summon them to the construction of new forms, and the solution of new synthetic problems. These problems are not yet fully recognized, but are dimly perceptible in the quest of complex experiences, in tendencies such as those manifested by artists to reunite arts which have hitherto been differentiated, to federate provinces heretofore entirely foreign to one another. The public is particularly aroused by the performance of productions which have philosophic ideas as a basis, and combine the elements of various arts. Personally I was distinctly conscious of this at the fine rendering of Prometheus at the Queen’s Hall, London. As I now reflect on the meaning of the war, I am inclined to attribute the public enthusiasm, which touched me so greatly at the time, not so much to the musical side of the work as to its combination of music and mysticism.”

In this connection, and to substantiate in some small degree the sentiment of Scriabin as expressed in that letter, I cull from *The Living Age* of March 20, 1920, this trenchant question and answer from an article called “The Unearthly Note in Modern Music”: “And why does the whole texture of modern music, even when it professes to utter ordinary human feelings, shine and shimmer with lights and colours not of this world? Why has so much of

it a tang which belongs to no fruit ever gathered from an earthly garden? Why is so much modern music either diabolian or ethereal? . . . The explanation has yet to be found. Partly perhaps our musicians obey the general movement of the time away from the elementary materialism in science, art and philosophy which satisfied the advanced thinkers of fifty years ago." Tentatively this writer suggests at the end of his article what the modern musicians modestly claim: "Or is it that music is actually leading us to altogether new lines and levels of thought? Are all musicians secretly determined that music shall not be distanced by the higher mathematics in generalizing the universe? We have much the same feeling when listening to Scriabin as when listening to Professor Eddington. Perhaps, unknown to us of grosser perception, our modern musicians already move in the time-space which is still an eerie habitation for persons of common clay."

Scriabin's Opus 60, the Fifth Symphony, called Prometheus, was, if you remember from its unfortunate presentation in New York by the Russian Symphony Orchestra, an experiment with sound and colour. You will recall that Scriabin had a scientific education in his youth, and in the year 1900 when these experiments with sound and colour were being made in various parts of the world, Scriabin was pursuing his own investigations along this line. There is a large bibliography on the subject of sound and colour in the book by Dr. Hull. Perhaps the reason for the failure of the satisfactory union of the two lies in our present concept of the

separateness of the senses. To one living at the periphery of being, a dual sense impression would produce what might be called an astigmatic consciousness at the moment. The sudden removal of Scriabin from this sphere of action when by force of magic he was about to unite all five senses in one art ritual, is of peculiar interest in view of the danger to humanity in awakening psychic power beyond its spiritual development.

The chord used by Scriabin harmonically and broken up into melodies has been termed Nature's chord, because it is made of fourths selected from the overtones of a given note, overtones hitherto disregarded. His followers have called it the mystic chord, probably by reason of correspondences invoked by the association of tones.

Some day I hope I may have definite lore to give regarding the character and potency of sound combinations. My individual experiments have so far been too trifling to put forward as a theoretical basis. Very interesting points do come out sometimes, however—like the experiment with Scriabin's chord



(see Hull, page 106), and the tones from which the chord was derived. That experiment made the Sun the ruling factor in the chord, and gave the tone

its ancient seat of power.<sup>1</sup>



Dr. Hull has been so very kind as to

<sup>1</sup> "Histoire de la Langue Musicale," by Maurice Emmanuel.

L'Antiquité pratique une échelle mineur, dont on peut dire qu'elle est le *Mineur absolu*, très différent de notre mineur bâtard. Ce mineur antique (mode de MI ou Doristi) tolère autour de lui des modes suffragants, dont il est le maître incontesté (page 5).

assure me personally that Scriabin's musical material was not a scale, but a chord. I had found a similarity between an ancient mode and the series of tones chosen by Scriabin for a given composition. Perhaps the ancient modes were made after findings by wise men in the East. When a chord is tall enough, if you lay it down it looks very like a scale. And nowadays many a scale has been squished up into a chord. Are they not, perhaps, the same animal, rampant or couchant?

These compositions no longer sound cacophonous when one has become familiar with the aural material involved. The harmonic stuff taken as a whole is the thing to dwell upon; the harmonic flow, broken up into little separate, numbered chords, is like the rhythmic flow broken up into little separate, measured beats. Scriabin did most of his writing in Brussels, where he had the association of such minds as Delville, who wrote the "Mission of Art," Mahrhofer, who wrote "The Psychology of Tone-colour," Verhaeren, and Geveart, and was in an earnest theosophical set; so it is quite possible, indeed highly probable, that the same method of choosing a given number of tones for use out of the twelve semitones, according to the location of the planets and the twelve signs of the zodiac, was employed by both the ancient lawgivers of music and the modern musical mystic who had somewhat of their lore.

It is well that some one has broken through the convention that a musical house must be built of neat little triads and locked up with a tonic chord for the night. It is no more essential than iambic



pentameter or a rhyme in alternate lines. Indeed I feel inclined to say of music as Padraic Colum has said of poetry: "The new forms they are creating are likely to further the production of a distinctive poetic literature for America. These forms are words in a new Declaration of Independence. For the future American poet may be the child of a Syrian or a Swede, or a Greek or a Russian. The traditional rhythms of English verse may not be in his blood and he might fumble in his poetry if he tried to use them. But here are verse measures that he can mould as he pleases."

With the limited material previously employed we had come to gauge every musician, creator and virtuoso alike, by the standard of technique. We had forgotten a very important fact which is so well spoken in a critique of Cufic writing in the *Times* magazine of December 16, 1917, that I cannot resist bringing it to your attention:

"It is a habit of criticism to find technical perfection at the moment when technique has lost its relation to the significance of its subject matter and has thus become a degraded and detached mechanical facility. Technique rightly considered is the result of power over means of expression, and when that power is at its full, technique mounts to its furthest heights." When the means of expression is new, "over-spectacled scholarship," to use Eastman's phrase, does not quite know what to look for. It is as if it had lost its glasses, and while they are being found something happens in art. When, as Amy Lowell says of our day, "ideas believed to be fundamental have disappeared and given place to others,"

from internal evidence it seems safe to say that in these others we have taken a step forward. Almost without a dissenting voice the young artists are proclaiming verities, — from John Powell, who says: "The artist must begin within — in his own soul. Life is the principal thing. It is a training of the spirit," to Percy Grainger's echo of the same thought: "In art there is no escaping from one's true inner nature; neither for beginner nor for finished artist."<sup>1</sup> The Very Reverend W. R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, might well take heart from this when he thinks what outlaws young artists were supposed to be in earlier days. He asseverates the hopelessness of reconstruction save on a spiritual basis, and says, "We need not be afraid of what is called other-worldliness, for our other world is no city in the clouds, but the deepest truth, the fullest reality, and the ultimate meaning of the world in which we live." In music, then, let the listener strive to "coöperate with the magician," so that we may all advance together, and not as the wild geese fly, the advance guard solitary. We are fortunate in having at least one English critic who feels what he hears. Mr. Ernest Newman gives us a picture of the *Poème d'Extase* as it was presented in London last Autumn that I must show you, because it is a picture not of the music but of the thing back of the music: "I suppose we do not quite get out of the music all that Scriabin put into it unless we have the same mental picture of its emotional sequences as he had. Unfortunately, few if any of

<sup>1</sup> "Modern Piano Mastery," 2nd Series, by Harriette Brower.

us can do this. We read that the Symphony depicts 'the ecstasy of untrammelled action, the joy in creative activity,' and so on and so on; but all this helps us very little. We have in the last resort to take it in the main as just a piece of orchestral music making itself as clear as it can to us in its own way, and taken thus it must strike even the most casual listener as a masterpiece among masterpieces. It not only takes us into a sphere that was previously unexplored territory for music, but guides us through it with an uncanny certainty, making us almost forget the newness of it all and be conscious only that here some of the most secret and mystical of our dreams have become reality. This is what one cannot sufficiently admire and wonder at—Scriabin's perfect command of an absolutely new musical language for the expression of moods so personal that not a hint of them will be found in the music of any other composer. It is all new—new rhythms that seem the very soul of movement set free from moving limbs; new harmonies of a strange force and sweetness and eloquence; a new colour that seems to be compounded of the rarer vibrations of the ether; and a new mental world, the world of a spirit that has no need of the concrete supports of ordinary thought, but weaves direct from the essences behind the concrete."

It is surely due the conductor of a performance that could inspire such thoughts to repeat here the measure of praise bestowed upon him by Mr. Newman in that column: "Mr. Coates gave a performance of it that defies description. It will remain with me as one of the half-dozen great

orchestral experiences of my life. A more complete absorption of an interpreter in a composer's style it has never been my luck to witness."

I wonder sometimes if Scriabin is just a clear pool in which each man sees himself reflected. The æsthetic Mr. Paul Rosenfeld looks at Scriabin as an æsthete. But Scriabin has not the negative force of the æsthete. He has the positive force of the mystic; and a "mystic" is one who "sees." I cannot agree with the polished essayist when he says, "To many it will appear highly doubtful that the music of Scriabin, product as it is of an inordinate, a flowerlike sensibility, could be acceptable to any but an over-refined and over-exquisite few."

"An inordinate, flowerlike sensibility" would be only the usual range of sensibilities made more subtle or more rare. With Scriabin it was rather vision than sensibility. It has not to do with over-refinement or the over-exquisite, it seems to me; there is a hardness, a ruthlessness even, in the human blade of grass that is brave enough to pierce the sod and face the sun.

If a musical message be an emotional message, it can be caught by myriads who would never understand it in words. But let it be a message of human import beyond the average emotional development, and by this I mean the development of perceptions that are not of the intellect, and it will be understood only by those who have attained a development above the average. Appreciation of Scriabin may mark the evolution of a nation's spiritual receptivity; a higher sensibility if you like, but turned toward the Sun. At any rate, what better gauge would you

suggest? Majolica, Sèvres, Céladon — I leave you to find their prototypes in ultramodern music.

As for Scriabin, with what exultant joy Arch Perrin exclaimed, "And just think — the vulgar never *will* like him!"







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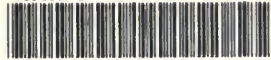
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